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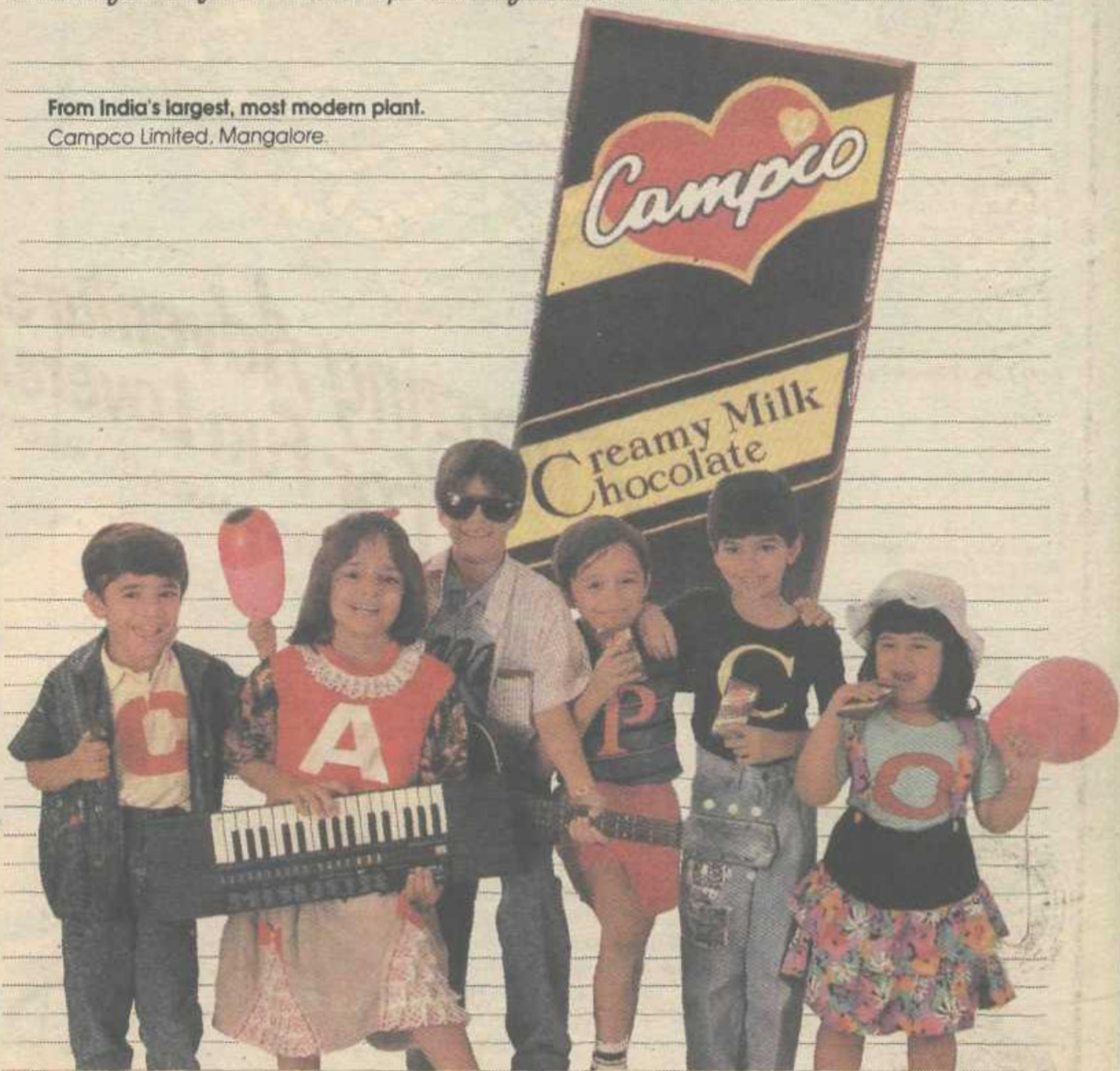


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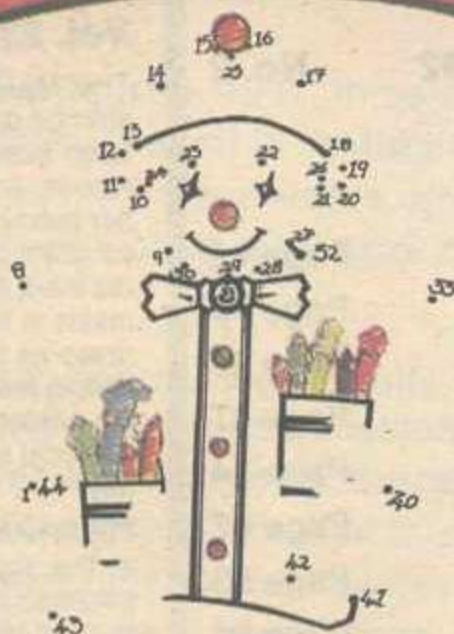
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CHANDAMAMA

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**And News Flash, Let Us Know
and More!**

NEXT ISSUE

Vol. 23 SEPTEMBER 1992 No. 3

THE MAGIC PALACE: Princess Vidyavati, now in a strange palace, is reconciled to the fact that she has been kidnapped. Though anxious about a possible rescue, she does not show or express any fear about her safety, as she is being looked after very well. Her constant companion is a lady looking almost like her old maid, Kamala. What surprises her most is, the other maids in the palace all look alike and wear the same dress as is given to her. She has also an uncanny feeling that everytime she is taken back after a stroll in the garden, she is made to enter a different room but identical to the one she has been kept earlier in the day.

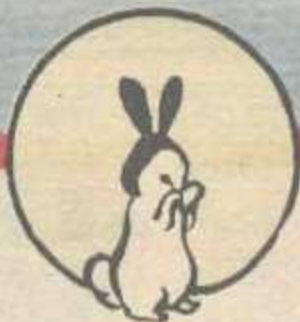
VEER HANUMAN: Vibhishana is overcome with grief at the sight of Rama and Lakshmana lying down unconscious. Sugriva consoles him, and they decide to send Hanuman to fetch medicinal herbs from the Himalayas. Before he leaves, a strong wind blows and it is caused by Garuda. At the very sight of the king of birds, the serpents that had bound Rama and Lakshmana by the *naga* arrow sent by Indrajit leave the two bodies, and the brothers regain consciousness. Garuda cautions them about the tricks that Ravana may resort to. Ravana now fears for his life when he is told that Rama and Lakshmana have regained consciousness and the Vanara soldiers have resumed fighting with redoubled enthusiasm.

ALSO a feature on children's role in the recent Earth Summit, PLUS all the regular features.

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An exercise for new architects

It was fifty years ago—on August 9, 1942, to be exact—that the Indian National Congress, under the leadership of Mahatma Gandhi, asked the British rulers to “quit India”; in other words, give India her freedom. Efforts are now on to commemoratate that historic moment and clarion call in a suitable manner.

Full five years passed before the country really became an independent nation. For any country, its constitution is the most sacred of its possessions. However, as years go by, the people who would have given a constitution “unto themselves” might find it necessary to bring about changes in the constitution, sometimes even adopt a new constitution. Recently, the Soviet Union broke up and some of the republics joined together under a new constitution; the two Germanys merged under a common constitution; Yugoslavia adopted a new constitution; Cambodia and Thailand have started the exercise of re-writing their respective constitutions.

The Indian Constitution, adopted in 1950, has in the past 42 years been amended nearly 60 times. Some of the intelligentsia in the country have started asking: hasn't the time come to take a fresh look at our constitution and replace it with a more mature one, to make the country “a peaceful, honest, just, and progressive nation”?

When we think of our Constitution, we also remember with great respect the architect of the Constitution—Dr. B.R. Ambedkar, whose birth centenary we recently celebrated. Let us hope the ‘architects to be’ will unveil what is best for the nation.

Towards a Brighter World

Rightly they called it the Earth Summit. The United Nations Conference on Environment and Development, held in June in the Brazilian city of Rio de Janeiro, for one thing concerned itself with strategies to "save" planet Earth from disintegration because of environmental pollution. And for another, the Conference drew some 115 heads of state or government—the largest ever for a global meet—to gather round the same table.

These leaders busied themselves by speaking on subjects like *biodiversity* and *global warming*. All their speeches were listened to with great interest and attention, some of them sympathetically, while others were received approvingly. The well-known international environmental organisation called Greenpeace, however, described the Earth Summit as a failure.

It was left to four children—two from Canada and one each from Chile and Germany—to breathe some fresh air into the Conference. Privileged to address the Summit,



they reminded the leaders that the time has come to mend ways and spare the planet. A 12-year-old from Canada told the Summit in these forceful words :

"I'm fighting for my future. I'm here to speak on behalf of the starving children around the world. I'm here to speak for the countless animals and birds dying across this planet. I'm afraid to go out in the sun because of holes in our ozone layer. I'm afraid to breathe the air because I don't know what chemicals are in it. If you don't know how to fix it, at least don't break it. We raised all the money to come here ourselves to tell you adults that you must change your ways."

The entire audience rose as one man to give a standing ovation to little Severn Suzuki at the end of her

speech. Television cameras did not fail to capture the poignant moment when some delegates were seen wiping away their tears. Why were their hearts moved?

We get a clue from the resolution titled "Agenda 21" adopted at the end of the Summit. Some countries calling themselves "developed nations" have, by promoting industries for the last hundred to two hundred years, been plundering without check the finite resources of Earth inflicting considerable environmental damage to the planet. The Earth Summit has told them that it is their prime duty *now* to clean up the damage, whatever the cost be.

After all, nobody can object to the tapping of Earth's resources for development, for the progress of mankind. But there has to be a "golden mean" between drawing

from Nature what we need to sustain ourselves and leaving to Nature what it requires to sustain itself for the future, as India's Prime Minister pointed out at the Summit. Mr. Narasimha Rao emphasised this point by quoting an ancient Indian poem which praises the Earth: "The ocean is your girdle, your bosom the mountains, O Goddess Earth! My obeisance to you. Forgive me for daring to touch you, with my feet."

Opening the Summit, Brazil's President urged the world leaders to work together to improve the environment, reminding them that "this is a unique and perhaps the last opportunity to build a new world." The question that remains is: how do we go about it?

Again, some cues have come from children. In his message to the "tree of life"—a metal-and-wood sculpture in a Rio park—a boy from England said, "I'll turn off lights when they are not needed, to save energy." A boy from New Mexico said, "I promise to pick up litter to make this a brighter world." Another child wrote: "I'll stop dropping litter. Instead, I'll put it in my pocket."

The world leaders may fail, but the coming generation will surely not. The 21st century awaits them with outstretched arms.





Master Liar

The Raja of Sivpuri one day had a brain-wave—to hold a competition to find out who would excel everybody in telling lies! He offered a title “Master Liar”, besides ten thousand silver coins.

“It’s a brilliant idea, sire!” the court-jester complimented the Raja. “We can hold this competition next New Moon day in the royal gardens.”

“I agree to your suggestion,” said the Raja. He then asked the jester to make the announcement.

He went home and thought of the details of the announcement that he would make the next morning. Suddenly, an idea struck him. The Raja merely wanted to find out the greatest liar. It could be anybody. Why, it could be himself! But how to prove it to the Raja? The very assignment the Raja had given him could be the best opportunity to prove that he

was the cleverest liar of all!

It was New Moon. The Raja had an early dinner and reached the palace gardens. He looked everywhere but could not find even a single competitor. In fact, no arrangement had been made to conduct any competition!

He called for the keeper of the gardens. “Isn’t any competition being held here tonight?”

“Competitions, your majesty?” said the gardener. He was hearing for the first time that a competition was being held in the palace gardens. “I don’t know anything, sire! Nobody told me, sire!” he pleaded ignorance.

The Raja then realised that something had gone wrong. He asked the gardener to go and fetch the court-jester. When he came, the Raja asked him, “What about the competition? Where are the participants? Haven’t you

made any arrangements? Didn't you announce the competition as I had asked you?"

"Competition, your majesty?" the court-jester spread his hands unbelievably. "Participants? Arrangements? Announcement? You didn't tell me anything about any competition! Neither did you ask me to make any announcement! How could I then make any arrangements?"

The Raja could not believe his ears. What nonsense was the court-jester talking? "Don't you remember, we had decided to hold a competition to pick up a Master Liar? Didn't I ask you to make an announcement that I would award a title and reward him with ten thousand silver coins?" The Raja was evidently angry with the court-jester.

"Your majesty, you never told me about any competition! And

you never gave me any orders to make any announcement. If you had given me such orders, I would have obeyed them. It all sounds strange! I hope you don't doubt that *I am lying!*"

Suddenly, it dawned on the Raja that he had already met the cleverest liar in his kingdom! He called one of the attendants and whispered in his ear. He went away and soon came back with a velvet bag. "There is no need for any competition," the Raja told the court-jester. "I know for certain that I told you about the competition. And you lied to me that I never told you anything like that. Here, take this reward. Henceforth you'll be known as the Master Liar in my kingdom."

The Raja did notice the mischievous smile on the court-jester's face as he grabbed the bag with the tinkling silver coins.



LAGHUPATANAKA THE CROW AND HIRANYAKA THE MOUSE TRAVEL A LONG DISTANCE.

HOLD TIGHT! WE'RE GOING DOWN.



THEY APPROACH THE LAKE WHERE MANTHARA THE TURTLE LIVES.

SOME ODD CREATURE! LET ME HIDE.



WAIT HERE, I'LL GO AND SEE WHERE MANTHARA IS.



MANTHARA! MANTHARA!



MANTHARA! WHERE ARE YOU? I'M YOUR FRIEND, LAGHUPATANAKA.



THE TURTLE HEARS THE VOICE AND COMES OUT OF THE LAKE.

HERE I'M, MY FRIEND.



THE FRIENDS SPEND SOME TIME HAPPILY...

WHO'S THAT MOUSE?



HIRANYAKA, A GOOD AND NOBLE FRIEND...



...WHOSE HEART SHEAVY WITH SORROW.

LET ME MEET HIM.



I'M DELIGHTED TO MEET YOU, SIR! MAY I KNOW THE CAUSE OF YOUR SORROW?

IT'S A LONG STORY... IN THE SOUTHERN COUNTRY, THERE'S A CITY, MAHILAPURA.



सर्वाः सम्पत्तयस्तस्य सन्तुष्टं यस्य मानसम् ।
उपानद्गूढपादस्य ननु चर्मावृतैव भूः ॥

THERE'S A SIVA TEMPLE. ADJACENT TO IT LIVED A HERMIT. CHUDAKARNA USED TO BEG AND GET HIS FOOD.



I LIVED IN HIS HIDEOUT, WITH MY FRIENDS AND RELATIVES.



BETTER I HIDE THIS FOOD HERE FOR TONIGHT



COME OUT, MY FRIENDS! HERE'S A FEAST FOR US!



HUSH! BE SILENT! FOLLOW ME.



HAI! AH! HAI! SO DELICIOUS!

WAH! WAH!



BHAVE! BHA...

BHAVE!



AFTER SOME TIME...

OH! THIS IS EMPTY! RATS MUST HAVE EATEN MY FOOD!



NEXT DAY...

NOW I'LL CHANGE THE PLACE AND FOOL THOSE NASTY RATS.



All the world's wealth is his who is contented in his mind. The whole earth is as good as covered with leather for one whose own feet are covered with shoes.

THAT NIGHT

HAI AH! HAI FEAST AFTER
FEAST FOR US, FRIENDS!

BHAVE!



THE HERMIT
CHANGED THE
PLACE EVERY
DAY, BUT IN
VAIN...

EMPTY!



ONE DAY A GUEST AR-
RIVES...

O! HOLY SIR! I'M BLESSED
BY YOUR VISIT.

CHUDAI! GOD BLESS
YOU!



THAT NIGHT, AFTER TAKING
FOOD, THEY INDULGE IN DIS-
CUSSING PHILOSOPHY. CHU-
DAKARNA ONLY THINKS OF
THE RAT-GANG.

CHUDAI! I WONDER
HOW ONE CAN GET
ETERNAL DELIVER-
ANCE WITHOUT RE-
BIRTH



EH... YOU MEAN... RATS, SIR?

WHAT! RATS? WHAT DO
YOU MEAN?



IT'S A PITY YOU'RE TURN-
ING A DEAF EAR TO MY
EXPOSITION OF VEDA-
NTA...



BUT, SIR..... EXCUSE ME,
SIR!



LET ME EXPLAIN THE CAUSE
OF MY ABSENT-MINDED-
NESS... THERE'S A WILY RAT...

SO WHAT?



THAT RAT AND HIS BAT
TALIONS INVADE MY
PLACE EVERY NIGHT
AND DEVOUR MY FOOD,
WHEREVER I KEEP IT.



I DON'T KNOW WHAT TO
DO WITH THESE RATS,
SIR!



पराचः कामाननुयन्ति बालास्ते मृत्योर्यन्ति विततस्य पाशम् ।
अथ धीरा अमृतत्वं विदित्वा ध्रुवमध्रुवेष्विह न प्रार्थयन्ते ॥



To Continue

The ignorant runs after false pleasures and falls into the wide net of death. The wise knows what is eternal; he does not expect anything of lasting value from the inconstant pleasures of life.

There's no escape for him!

Who is a whipping boy? asks *Prashanto Das of 24 Parganas*. The expression originates from the practice in olden times when the children of commoners were admitted to schools where the royal children were sent; and whenever these blue-blooded children got into scrapes, or did some mischief, or were caught red-handed, no punishment was given to them; instead, a commoner's son was chosen to receive punishment! Unfair though it was, it was an accepted practice. There is near similarity in another expression—scapegoat—given to a person who is blamed or punished for the sins of others. In the days of Moses, the ritual on the Day of Atonement comprised a goat being allowed to escape into wilderness, after the sins of people were symbolically laid upon it. However, there is no escape for the whipping boy!



R. Manickavachagam of Palayamkottai was dropped from the School Eleven a day before the team were to play in the Final of the Inter-school Cricket Tournament. As an ace batsman, his inclusion in the team had been a certainty. But he was surprised, more than disappointed, when he did not find his name in the list put up on the notice board. Before he went to meet the Physical Director, he met the captain, and asked him why he had been dropped. He replied, "You may search me!" and walked off. What did the captain mean by it? he asks. The senior boy had simply meant, he did not know the answer to the batsman's question. Even if he had searched for an answer, he would not have found one on the captain. If he had also replied, "Ask me another", the captain would have meant the same thing—he did not have the answer. Both expressions are very commonly used in the U.S.A., from where they originated.



(Ugrasen, Commander-in-Chief of Veergiri, sends his soldiers all over the kingdom in search of Princess Vidyavathi missing from the lake resort. He introduces to King Veerasen the young man who has approached him with a strange request. Mahendranath offers to join the search provided his mother can be taken care of during his absence.)

King Veerasen took a good look at the young man standing before him, and he thought that his Commander-in-Chief Ugrasen's assumption was not far from correct. He had an aristocratic look about him. He appeared, though not of royalty but someone closely related.

As the Raj Jyotishi was going

out of the room, Ugrasen watched whether there was any sign of Acharya Vachaspati recognising the young man. He came to the conclusion that the young man was neither Jagatpati nor anyone whom the Raj Jyotishi knew. The Commander turned to the king and said, "This is the young man who has offered

AN OFFER WITH A CONDITION



to go in search of the Princess.”

“Who are you? What’s your name?” The king put a volley of questions to him. “Where are you from? Our soldiers have fanned out in every direction and some have even gone to the neighbouring countries. Did you say you’ll go in search of the princess all by yourself? By the way, have you ever seen her? Will you be able to recognise her?”

The young man all the while stood with folded hands. “Your majesty, my mother and I never missed watching the procession on her birthday every year. I’m

sure I’ll recognise her anywhere.”

“You didn’t tell us who you are,” the king reminded him.

“Mahendranath is my name, your majesty,” said the young man, very humbly. “My mother and I stay near the Devi temple, a little away from the capital. She gathers flowers for the temple and makes garlands for the deity. I go in search of work every morning and we’re happy with the little earnings that we make. I lost my father when I was not even three. We were looked after by my uncle and aunt, but when she died suddenly, he was heart-broken and one day he left us, and we don’t know where he is. By then I was a grown-up and could work and earn.”

“A search like this will not be easy. Do you know that?” The king asked a straight forward question, keeping in mind the strange request that the youth had earlier made to the Commander-in-Chief. “It may take days, and there may be hazards on the way, too.”

“I know all that, your majesty,” replied Mahendranath very politely. “Once I start, I may not come back for days together.



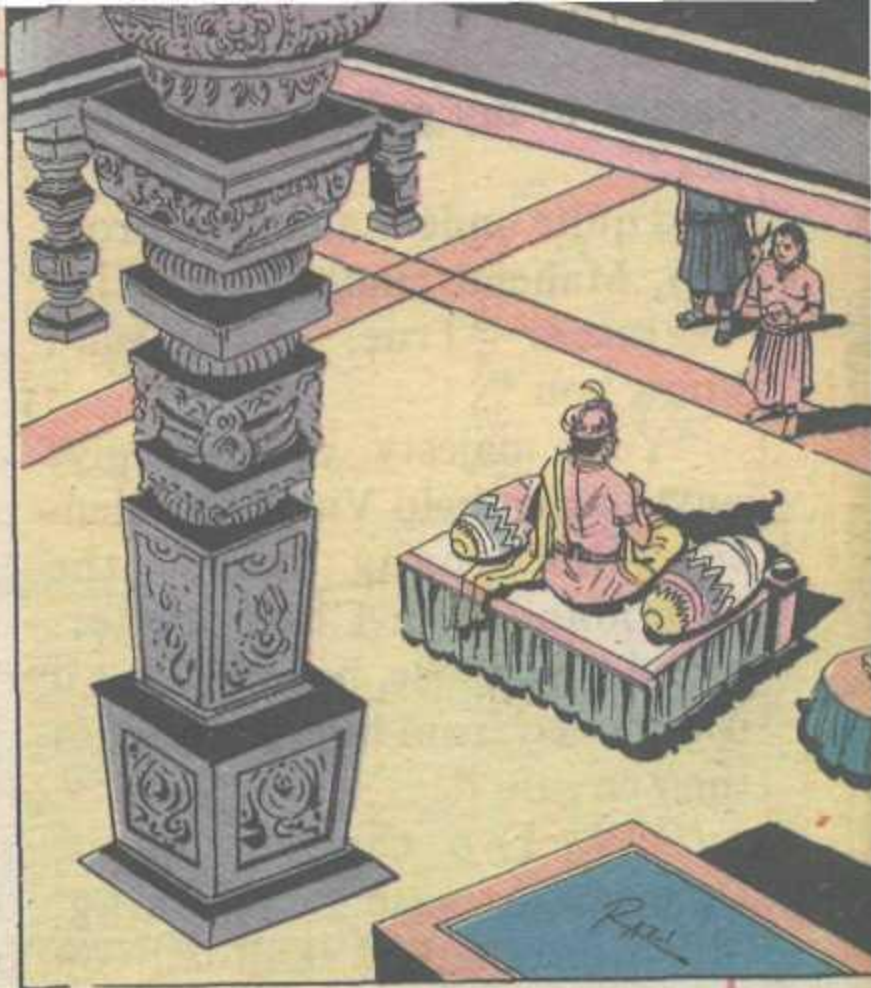
I'm not bothered about dangers that I might encounter. What worries is my mother. Who'll look after her when I am away? That anxiety made me go to the Commander-in-Chief with a request regarding my mother."

"Yes, Ugrasen mentioned it to me," said King Veerasen. "Suppose we agree to your request, will you have other demands when you come back? Of course, I shall suitably reward you."

"Believe me, your majesty," protested Mahendranath, "I had never thought of rewards or awards. After all, isn't it every citizen's duty to offer help in a calamity like this? Unlike many others, I'm quite familiar with this place and I thought I might not find it very difficult to go in search of the princess. If I get an assurance that my mother will be looked after during my absence, I can go without any worry."

"Mahendranath, we agree to your request," responded the king. "When will you start?"

"Even tomorrow, your majesty," replied Mahendranath, "I don't need any preparations, except..." He left the sentence unfinished.



"Except? Except what?" the king asked, suspecting whether Mahendranath was coming up with another request.

"Except what, Mahendranath?" echoed Ugrasen. "Didn't you tell me that you don't need any escort and that you would go all by yourself?"

"Sir, I didn't mean anything otherwise," said the young man, now facing the Commander-in-Chief. Turning to King Veerasen, he said, "Your majesty, I shall be able to recognise the princess. But, if I succeed in meeting her, how will I convince her you've

agreed to my going in search of her?"

"I quite understand your problem, Mahendranath," said King Veerasen. "True, she doesn't know you."

"Your majesty, we can't give anything to help Vidyavati identify this young man," the Commander-in-Chief interjected. "Suppose, he loses it or it is removed from him; it may not then be safe."

"Yes, I've thought of it, Ugrasen," said the king. "Mahendranath, I shall tell you something, but keep it to yourself. My daughter has a birthmark on her right shoulder. Only the queen and myself know about it. If you tell this to the princess, she'll know that you've got the information from one of us. I think that should be sufficient. But, mind you, you're not to divulge it to anyone. It has been a long meeting, Mahendranath. Ugrasen will arrange everything for your mother, and you may start on your journey early tomorrow. Remember, we all will be eagerly awaiting your return with some information about Princess Vidyavati." The king rose from his seat and

retired to his chambers.

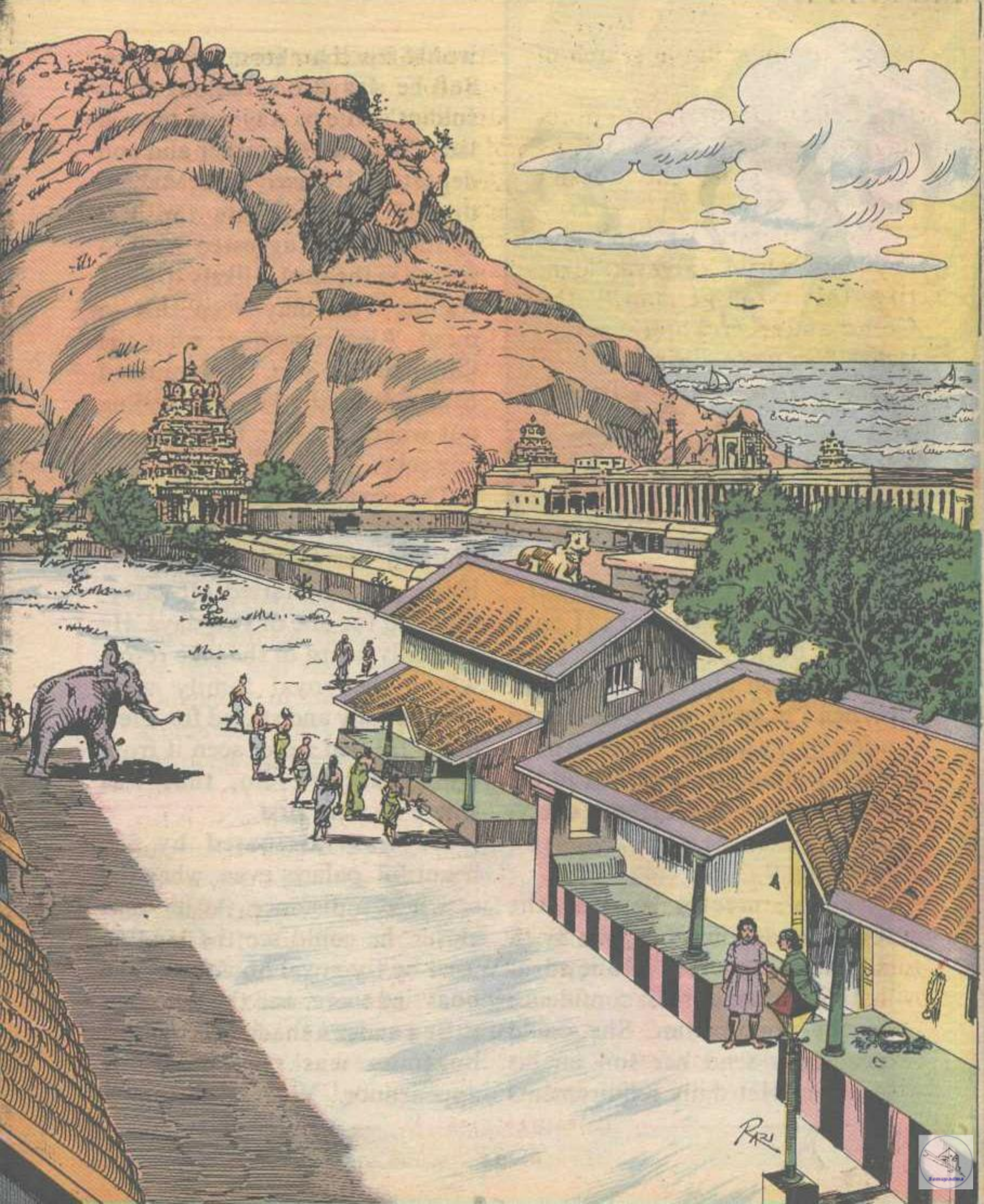
Before Ugrasen called an attendant and asked him to take Mahendranath to the palace gates, he asked him to see him again in the evening along with his mother. When he reached home, Mahendranath found his mother making garlands for the evening *puja* at the temple. "Mother, you know what? I've just had an audience with the king!"

"With King Veerasen, did you say? At the palace?" said the woman unbelievably. Mahendranath had left home early as usual, and her belief was that he had gone in search of work. "Are you getting a job at the palace, my son?"

"Not now, mother, may be later," replied Mahendranath, not revealing everything in one lot. "The king has given me permission to go and search for the princess. If I succeed, I can then ask for a job in the palace."

"Search for the princess?" asked his mother, full of anxiety. "Where will you search for her? Nobody knows where she has gone or been taken. And, when will you come back, Mahendra? I'll be all alone!"







"Oh, don't worry, mother," pacified the youngster. "I shall come back as soon as I get information about the princess. When I'm away, you'll be looked after by the palace. We've to meet the Commander-in-Chief in the evening, and he'll arrange everything. I must start tomorrow morning."

Their meeting with the Commander-in-Chief was brief. Ugrasen assured Mahendranath's mother of their confidence in the young man. She could peacefully send her son on his mission. Her daily requirements

would reach her from the palace, and he was also arranging for a soldier's wife to stay with the old lady. Before the mother and son departed, Ugrasen told Mahendranath, "It appears the Raj Jyotishi has suggested that a search in the west is likely to yield results. You may keep this in mind. Also remember what the king had told you," he reminded Mahendranath, without spelling out what it was, in his mother's presence.

The next morning Mahendranath took leave of his mother. He touched her feet and took her blessings, and started off carrying food for one or two days. He had only heard of the lake resort where the royal family went occasionally and stayed for a few days. He had never seen it from close quarters. So, that was where he went first.

He was fascinated by the beautiful palace even when he saw it at a distance. As he went closer, he could see the landing used by the royal household, the boat tied there, and the boatman sitting under a shade nearby. The boatman was struck by his appearance. Was he bringing



some message from the palace? he wondered, as he stood up and greeted the young man. "Sir, are you from the palace?"

"No. Why do you ask?" queried Mahendranath.

"I was only wondering whether there had been any news of Princess Vidyavati," replied the boatman. "If she has come back or has been found, then the queen's maid in the lake resort can go back to the palace. Poor lady! Ever since the princess disappeared, she has been staying here all by herself. Daytime, one or two maids from the palace would bring food for her, just as they did when the princess, too, stayed here, and they would go back after one or two hours."

"To the best of my knowledge, the princess has not yet been

found," said Mahendranath. "In fact, that's why I've started on a search for her. Yesterday, I took the permission of the king."

"You must be really brave, my young friend," remarked the boatman. "But where'll you search for her? Nobody knows where she has been taken. One thing is certain; she didn't come this way. She must have been taken along some other part of the lake. And the lake is deep everywhere, except between this landing and the palace. Nobody uses this side except the king."

"Let me go along the lake and see whether I can find an opening or a clearing. If I don't find any, I shall come back here. Farewell!"

"Farewell, my boy!" wished the boatman. "Best of luck!"

—To continue



WORLD OF
SPORT



BARCELONA 1992

Olympic flame

The next Olympic Games is due to open in the Spanish city of Barcelona in another 25 days. The traditional Olympic flame was lit at a solemn ceremony in the ancient stadia at Olympia, in Greece. Actress Maria Pambouki, who had the privilege of lighting the lamp with the aid of sunrays, handed a torch carrying the flame to the first runner, 21-year-old hammer thrower Sawas Sardsoylou. And for the first ever time in Olympic history, the torch was stolen soon afterwards! Sardsoylou had run hardly a kilometre when the second runner approached him and took charge of the torch. Both the athlete as well as the torch disappeared from the scene, as the third runner awaited his turn. A second torch was then lit from the Olympic flame and the run was resumed. By the time the torch reaches Barcelona on July 25, some 9,000 odd people, including Juan Antonio Samaranch, President of the International Olympic Committee, would have carried it in relay on foot, bicycle, and hydrofoil, besides by ship between the ports of Piraeus in Greece and Ampurias in Spain.



Barcelona Briefs

* Despite a new 6-lane 35 km ring road around the Olympic venue, the authorities are expecting traffic jams. Someone thought of a practical solution. Hoardings along the approach roads say: Welcome to Barcelona, but don't bring cars!

* Journalists covering the Games can make use of taxis (\$420 a day) fitted with telephones and even portable fax machines to send their messages worldwide.

* The Olympic village where athletes and officials will stay can



accommodate 15,200 people. Requests for accommodation have run into nearly 20,000! The participating countries have now been asked to reduce the size of their delegation.

* Participation of Yugoslavia is unlikely because of the UN sanctions against that country where fighting is still raging.

* Inmates of one of the prisons close to Barcelona have, with the approval of the officials, devised their own events, with the sole exception of pole vault. You know why, don't you?





TALES FROM MANY LANDS (PERSIA)

THE THIRD WISH

Long ago there lived a king. He was a very religious and devout man, indeed! He erected a magnificent temple in his capital and issued a decree. The royal herald went to every corner of the realm, beating his drums: "*Who-soever passes under the heavenly arch in front of the temple without offering prayers and without uttering the name of God, shall be forthwith put to death.*"

One day a washerman, riding a donkey, a cudgel in hand, passed under the arch. As he was not aware of the law, naturally he did not pray there. The guards at once pounced on him and dragged him before the king.

The king twitched his moustache and then, looking over his big round belly, said, "You midget! How dare you defy the law of the land and prove yourself irreligious when I, your king,



is so religious? Has anyone ever seen me passing under the arch without stopping for prayer?"

"None, Your Majesty!" said the courtiers. "You never fail to pray there."

"Your Majesty, I was ignorant of your decree, since I was away on a visit to my granny beyond the hills and had stayed there for a full year," said the man bowing ceremoniously.

Alas, his plea was of no avail. The king asked him to prepare himself to die. However, he was told that since he had committed the sin unwittingly, he

would be granted any three wishes. Only two things he could not ask for—his life or the royal throne.

The washerman looked with tearful eyes from the king to the courtiers, from the courtiers to the king, and pleaded for mercy. But all his efforts were in vain.

Helpless, he truly prayed for a moment. All of a sudden the cudgel fell from his trembling hand and a flash in his mind gave him the indication what he should do. Mustering courage he said in a clear loud tone, "My first wish is that twenty thousand gold pieces should be sent to my family."

It was at once done and the receipt duly signed by his wife was presented to him.

"Now, what's your second wish?" asked the king.

"That under no circumstance, even if my life is spared, should I be obliged to return the gold."

"All right, But you're going to die. What's your third wish?" asked the king.

"That everyone of you, starting from His Majesty downwards

right up to the sentries, shall receive three blows from my cudgel. One a light blow, one a medium blow, and yet one a hard blow. May I now commence with Your Majesty?" said the washerman with a little chuckle.

The king, who all this while was busy twirling his moustache and patting his belly, almost jumped out of his seat. Much perturbed, he consulted his ministers, who advised him that since he had promised that the wishes of the fellow would be granted, everybody should get ready for the treatment.

So, the king descended from

his pedestal and almost carried the throne with him tightly stuck to his back. Such a healthy king he was!

The washerman was signalled to begin and he laid his cudgel with such force on His Majesty's strong shoulders that the king fell down flat and swooned away. When he came back to his senses after the ministers sprinkled water on his face, he asked in a feeble voice, "Tell me, my good man, to which category did this blow belong, was it light, medium, or hard?"

"His Majesty shall know the nature of the first blow only after



he receives the second one," curtly replied the washerman.

Throwing up his hands, the king then silently exclaimed to himself, 'O God, if this was a light stroke, then I am surely not going to open my eyes again!'

Suddenly, an idea flashed in his mind. He summoned the guards posted at the temple and demanded of them, "How did you chaps know that this good man did not pray?"

"Your Majesty, we did not see or hear him pray!" answered the guards.

"Shut up, you fools. Do you see everything that is there?" demanded the king.

"No, Your Majesty."

"Do you see or hear your thoughts?"

"No, Your Majesty."

"Then, how could you have

seen or heard his prayers? Answer me, be quick!"

"We could not have, Your Majesty," said the guards in a chorus. "We withdraw our complaint."

"We say that this good man did pray! In silence. Do you disagree with us?" asked the king.

"No, never, Your Majesty."

"That's sensible of you!" said the king, silently thanking himself that he had been sensible himself before the second blow had fallen on him!

The washerman was set free—and he returned to a home already richer by twenty thousand gold pieces.

He knew within, in his heart—this was because he had indeed prayed—a bit late, though.

Retold by Anup Kishore Das



**Not one,
but several**

WORLD OF NATURE



Scutty, Juggy—they are how Jenny Wren is popularly called. One of the smallest of birds, it has a long Latin name, *Troglodytes troglodytes*. Despite its small size, Jenny will boldly attack birds of a larger size. The cock bird enjoys nest-building so much that it builds not one but several nests, leaving it to the female to select one of them for laying eggs.



Insect energy



A common flea can jump several hundred times its own length in a split second. It can jump backwards, too.

An ant may live up to 16 years. Ants keep several species of insects in their nests as "guests", to "milk" for the sweet honeydew exuding their bodies. They post sentries to guard their aphids from intruders.

White ants generally build tall nests, sometimes even 15 to 20 ft high, which are comparable to human structures, like the pyramids of Egypt.



Largest bats

Bats are the only flying mammals. The largest of bats, called Kalong, are found in Indonesia and Malaysia. It has a wing span of nearly six feet.

CHANDAMAMA SUPPLEMENT-46



BIRDS AND ANIMALS OF INDIA

THE BEAUTIFUL BLACKBUCK

There are four different kinds of antelopes found in India. They are the Chinkara or the Indian gazelle, the blackbuck or the Indian antelope, the Chowsingha or the four-horned antelope, and the Nilgai or the blue bull. Of these, the most beautiful is the blackbuck. It is the lone representative of the genus *antelope cervicapra* in India. What is striking about this animal is its shiny coat of black-and-white and the spiral horns which the male sports. It stands about 80cm at the shoulder and weighs about 40kg. It has a very keen eyesight, but a rather weak sense of smell and hearing. Once spread all over India, blackbucks are now mostly confined to Gujarat, Rajasthan, and Punjab. In the south, they are found in the Guindy National Park in Madras, where it was introduced in 1924 by the then Governor of Madras. Fastest among quadrupeds, they are a sight when they go in leaps and bounds with a peculiar grace.

A PRIZE NARRATOR

It was a story-telling competition organised by a popular magazine published from Madras. Some 900 children participated, and nearly 50 of them were short-listed for the final round. Ultimately, 13 children—considered as ‘story-telling prodigies’—were selected for prizes. One of them went to five-year-old Deepak. A spastics child, he was the only handicapped child among the participants.

Despite his difficulty in speaking, Deepak Srinivasan narrated a string of stories centering around Tenali Rama and Krishnadevaraya, and Birbal and Akbar. He had heard their stories from his elders and retained each minute detail in his prodigious memory.

At the Centre for Special Education run by the Madras chapter of the Spastics Society of India, Deepak is rated as one of the most special “among our special children”. He goes to the Centre for his daily physiotherapy sessions, which he enjoys, though sometimes he gets tired when he is carried from one room to another. But he never gives any indica-



tion of the agony he undergoes. He is all smiles anytime you see him.

He is a TV enthusiast and never misses programmes of film music. He easily picks up the tunes and makes an attempt to sing them and is often quite successful. His favourite programme, however, is “The World This Week” and is able to recall the items days later. He has an uncanny memory for details—which he exhibits by reeling out the names of his family friends, their addresses, and even their telephone numbers.

With a view to improving his speech powers, Deepak is being taught Carnatic music, for which he has taken a liking. Cricket, football, and tennis are his favourite games—and he regularly watches them on the TV. He is a fan of Kapil Dev.

Bright-eyed and extremely intelligent, Deepak, like any other boy his age, loves three Cs—chocolate, cake, and ice cream! But for his disability which restricts his hands while writing, he might have sent in his stories for publication.

DO YOU KNOW?

1. In which city was held the earliest known literary assembly?
2. Who wrote the Ramayana in Hindi for the first time?
3. What distinguishes the Botanical Gardens of Calcutta?
4. A Persian legend describes the fight between a father and son in which both are killed, before they know their real identity. Who are they?
5. The elections to the Ninth Lok Sabha were a landmark. What was the most distinguishing feature?
6. How many times was Pandit Nehru chosen Congress President?
7. The English alphabet contains 26 letters. Two European languages have the same number of letters. Which are they?
8. A Sinhalese hero came to India, defeated the Cholas in Ramnad, and installed a Pandyan ruler in Madurai? Who was he?
9. A Sultan of Delhi died while playing polo. Who was he?
10. What was the name of Raja Ranjit Singh's favourite horse?
11. Besides the Ganga and Yamuna, three other sacred rivers are associated with the Kumbh Melas. Which are they?
12. The Sikhs celebrate the birth anniversaries of two of their Gurus as big festivals. Who are these Gurus?
13. In bullfight, what is the greatest honour bestowed upon a matador at the end of the fight?
14. What is unique about the Shaswati Museum in Bangalore?
15. Who was the first Archbishop of India?

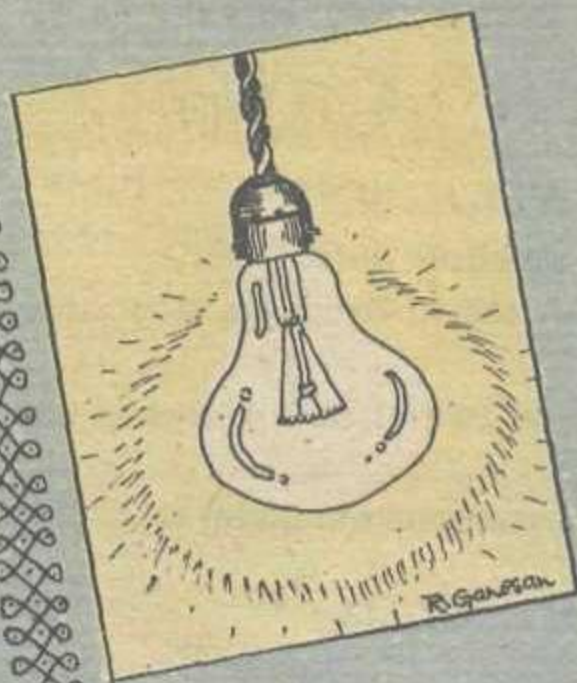
ANSWERS

1. Madurai—Tamil Sangam
2. Tulsidas—Ramcharit Manas.
3. It is the largest in Asia
4. Rustom and Sohrab
5. The voting age was lowered to 18. The elections also resulted in a hung Parliament for the first time, with no party enjoying an absolute majority.
6. Seven times
7. German and Dutch
8. Parakrama Bahu
9. Qutbuddin Alibak
10. Lalji
11. Narmada, Cauveri, and Godavari
12. Guru Nanak Dev and Guru Gobind Singh
13. The two ears and tail of the bull
14. It was the first museum on women in India
15. Bishop Juan de Albuquerque

NEWSFLASH

Record price

Rare stamps fetch fabulous prices. One such is a 1904 stamp bearing the head of King Edward VII of England. This brown-mauve stamp was sold for 56,000 U.S. dollars—the highest price ever paid for a 20th century British stamp. It was bought by a stamp-collector in Switzerland.



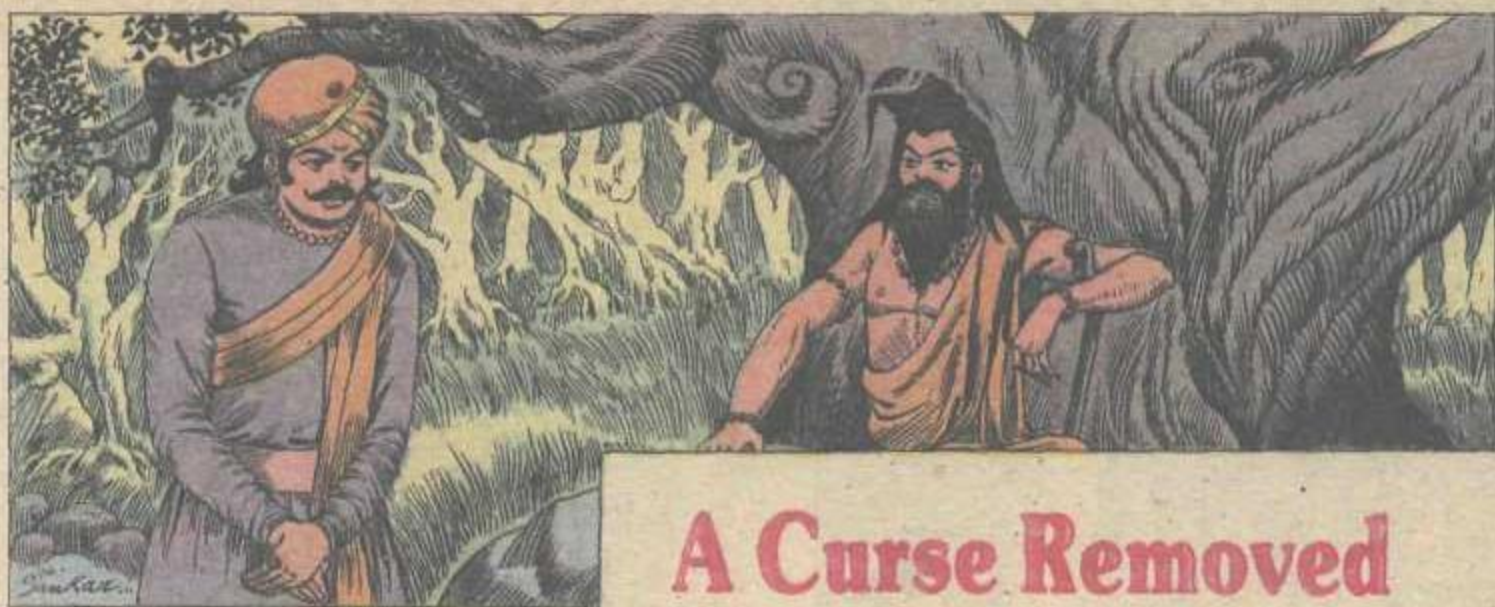
Long-lasting bulb

An electric bulb that will burn for 20,000 hours has been developed by a company in California after several years of research. Described as electronic light and also as E-lamp, the device is expected to have a life span of 18 years if used for three hours every day.

Suez Canal

The Suez Canal connecting the Mediterranean and the Red Sea is now 18 metres deep. Work is on to deepen it to 22 metres, so as to allow more ships to sail directly, instead of circumnavigating the African coast, thus cutting short the sailing time by at least 10 to 14 days. More than 90 per cent of world's merchant fleet will be benefited by the "modernisation" programme now awaiting completion.





A Curse Removed

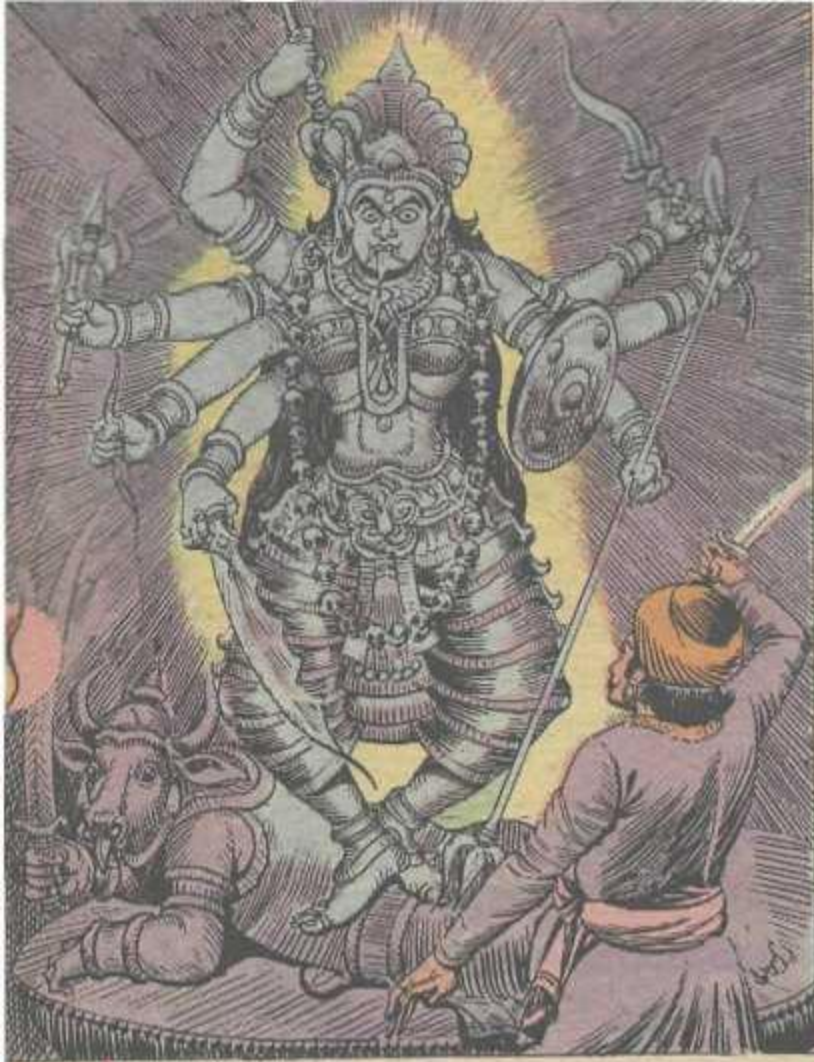
Unlike other sages, Ugramurthi, true to his name, was a short-tempered *muni*. He lived in a forest in Gandharanya. He would curse anybody and everybody irrespective of his or her status. King Gunasena once became a victim of the muni's curse for no fault of his and he was turned into a demon.

Under Gunasena's rule, his subjects had enjoyed all prosperity. However, the demon now caused havoc among the people. His minister Chaturmath knew that Ugramurthi was responsible for the change in the king. He decided to call on the muni to seek a reprieve. After all, it is only a good ruler who can make his people happy. And a good ruler is also essential for the effective functioning of his ministers.

"O! Sage! You've indirectly punished innocent people. You must take back the curse imposed on the king. You've all the power for granting a reprieve," Chaturmath pleaded with the muni.

Ugramurthi refused to withdraw the curse. "If a demoniac king should cause harm to his people, take it from me that it is just their fate. Nobody can change what has been fated."

"There's some truth in what you say, revered muni," said Chaturmath pleadingly. "Our people have suffered enough. Maybe, it is their fate now to get some relief. That's why god himself took pity on them and prompted me to come to you with this request. Pray, do tell me, what can we do to have the curse taken off the king? Please



advise me for the sake of the people.”

“My son! I’m very happy to see you plead on behalf of the people. I shall accept your plea and tell you of a way to save your king. There’s a temple of Mother Kali some hundred miles away. If you worship Her, She might grant your wish.”

Minister Chaturmath took leave of Ugramurthi and started on his journey to the Kali temple with great expectations. He encountered a lot of hurdles and hazards on the way. At last he reached the temple, where the

idol of Mother Kali was really fearsome. Chaturmath offered worship for full three nights. Just before dawn on the fourth day, Mother Kali appeared before him. “My son! I know what had brought you here. Your aim is very noble. If you wish the curse on your king to disappear, you should write a story covering a thousand leaves and in a language that can be understood even by the common man. You should then read it out to the king. But be careful; you should not stop in the middle even for once. By the time, the king listens to the entire story, he would have changed to his old self.”

Chaturmath was in a dilemma. “O Divine Mother! I’ve been trained only in politics, commerce, statecraft, and warfare. I don’t have much knowledge of art and literature. How can I then write a story—and a long story at that?” he pleaded with her.

“Don’t think it is impossible for you,” the goddess said encouragingly. “It’s a common trait with people to plead ignorance or incapability. People seldom make a sincere effort. Suppose you were to observe something



wonderful, something exciting; how will you describe it to others? In the same way, you can imagine something and put it across in the form of a story. When the king listens to it, the curse, too, will vanish."

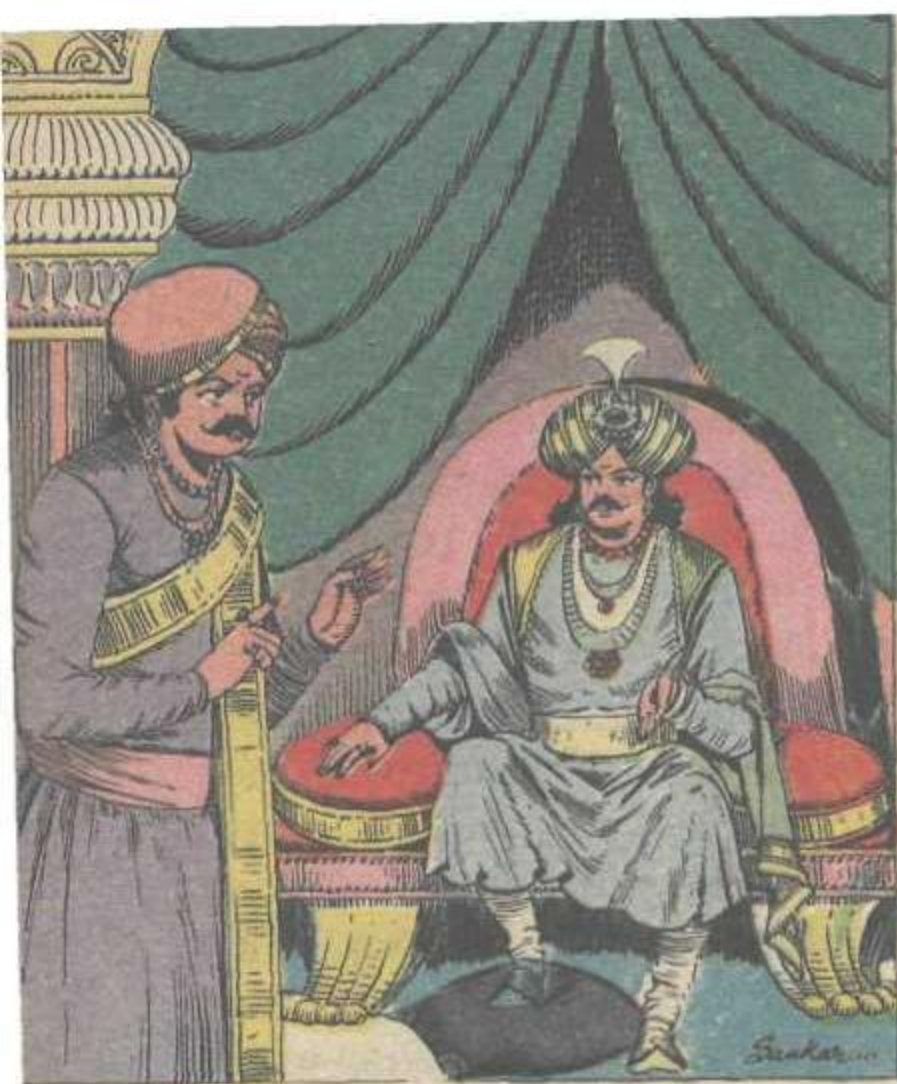
Chaturmath prostrated before the goddess and started back for the capital. Before long, he managed to imagine a story, wrote it down on a thousand palm leaves, and went in search of the demon-turned king.

He seemed to have been just waiting for someone to go to him. The demon was about to pounce on Chaturmath, when the minis-

ter, unmindful of the threat, coolly sat down and began reading from the palm leaves. Before he picked up the second leaf, the demon had turned like a snake under the spell of the snake-charmer's pipe. As the minister went from one leaf to another, the demon stood still listening to the story. And by the time Chaturmath had gone over the last sentence on the very last palm leaf, the demon had turned himself as King Gunasen. The minister could not believe his eyes as he looked at the king with a newborn admiration.

Chaturmath accompanied





Gunasen to the palace. By that time, the king had recollected all that had happened after his meeting with Ugramurthi. "Chaturmath! Your determination is unparalleled. This is a good example of how ministers can be of service to their kings even in times of adversity. I liked your story very much. You must write many more stories like that," the king suggested.

"Your majesty, I had only one aim when I wrote that story, and that was to help you come out of the muni's curse," Chaturmath excused himself. "I don't know

how I wrote that story; I seem to have received some inexplicable power. I don't think I'm capable of writing another story. There are several scholars among the courtiers. Your majesty should ask them to write."

Gunasen asked some of the pundits to read Chaturmath's story and to write stories like that. They went back to the king and expressed their inability. "Your majesty, we're afraid we can't attempt anything like this. We can't even understand the theme of the story," they said with some contempt.

The king was angry. "I'm ashamed of you people who pose as scholars. I shall announce a competition and offer a thousand silver coins for the best stories. People must read such stories."

When the competition was announced, there was a host of people who wanted to write stories. The pundits were reluctant to read them and express their opinion to the king so that he could give away the awards. They even feared that they might lose their status in the court. Soon they conferred among themselves. "All this has hap-



pened because of that muni, Ugramurthi. Let's all go and meet him. If he were to curse us, well and good. We can at least avoid reading these stories."

The pundits went to Ugramurthi, who was deep in meditation at that time. When he opened his eyes, he asked them the purpose of their visit. They explained everything and gave the muni the story written by Chaturmath. The moment he read the first few lines, the muni knew from where the minister might have derived the inspiration to write it. "Your visit has dispelled some of my fears. In fact, my temper which

had become notorious was equally a curse on me and I was trying to get over it. I'm sorry I had harmed several people because of my temper and with my curse on them. After reading this story, I've the feeling that a change is coming over me, too. It has that capacity to influence people."

The pundits were surprised listening to Ugramurthi's reaction to Chaturmath's story. "Probably only demons, can appreciate such stories and benefit by them—like your king. Now that everybody in the kingdom has read this story, I won't be able to take my anger on





anyone anymore." Ugramurthi then looked at the sky, and said, "I was instrumental in minister Chaturmath writing this story. I also know who inspired him to write. Now that I, too, have read

it, I have earned my salvation."

As the Pundits watched with wonder, the muni boarded a pushpak chariot, which rose above their heads and vanished into the clouds.

SPOT THE TEN DIFFERENCES



LEAVES FROM THE LIVES OF THE GREAT

Come Independence Day (August 15), and we remember all those who fought for the country's freedom. One of them was Chandra Sekhar, of village Bhabra in Madhya Pradesh. He ran away to Bombay when he was hardly twelve to escape his father's wrath. From there he moved to Banaras three years later, to learn Sanskrit and Hindi. He was electrified at the call by Gandhiji for non-cooperation (with the British) and civil disobedience. He joined a students procession carrying a Congress flag and was arrested. The Magistrate asked him his name. He answered "Azad" (freedom). Father's name? "Swadhin" (independent) was the answer. Residence? Chandra Sekhar replied, "Prison". The punishment was fifteen lashes on his bare back. Not a sigh escaped his lips, and all the while he was shouting "Bande Mataram" and "Mahatma Gandhi ki jai." When he was released from prison, among those present to greet him was the Congress leader, Dr. Sampurnanand, who later became Chief Minister of Uttar Pradesh. He addressed the freedom-fighter as "Azad", and after that he came to be known as Chandra Sekhar Azad.





Salesmanship

Hari was a small trader in a village, just managing to eke out a livelihood. One day, he happened to visit the town some distance away. As he wandered in the market-place, he found Jivan from his own village selling umbrellas. Hari was not aware that Jivan had left the village and set up a shop in the town. He appeared to be doing well in his business. It was monsoon time and the shop attracted customers because of the umbrellas displayed there. Hari decided to watch how Jivan was carrying on his business, unnoticed by him.

He saw a rather lean gentleman going to Jivan's shop, and enquiring about the umbrellas. "I would suggest a light umbrella for you," Hari heard Jivan tell his customer. "I think I can select

one for you." Jivan took an umbrella from the stand, opened it out, and displayed it for the customer, who was quite satisfied with the choice. He paid the price and left the shop with the umbrella.

A little later, a fat customer entered the shop. "Could I see a large-sized umbrella?" he asked Jivan. "Sure, I think I've one or two special umbrellas," said Jivan. "You need a heavy umbrella. The handle should be strong." He selected an umbrella, tested its weight by swinging it, and had it opened.

The customer thought that it was wide enough for him as he held the open umbrella in his hand. "I think it just suits you. It will save you from rain and the sun," said Jivan encouragingly.

The customer did not waste any time. He, too, paid the price and went away carrying the umbrella.

Hari who was watching all this from the courtyard in front of the shop now approached Jivan. "You seem to be doing roaring business, Jivan!"

It was only then that Jivan noticed Hari. "How come you're here in the town? Please sit down. We haven't met for ages!"

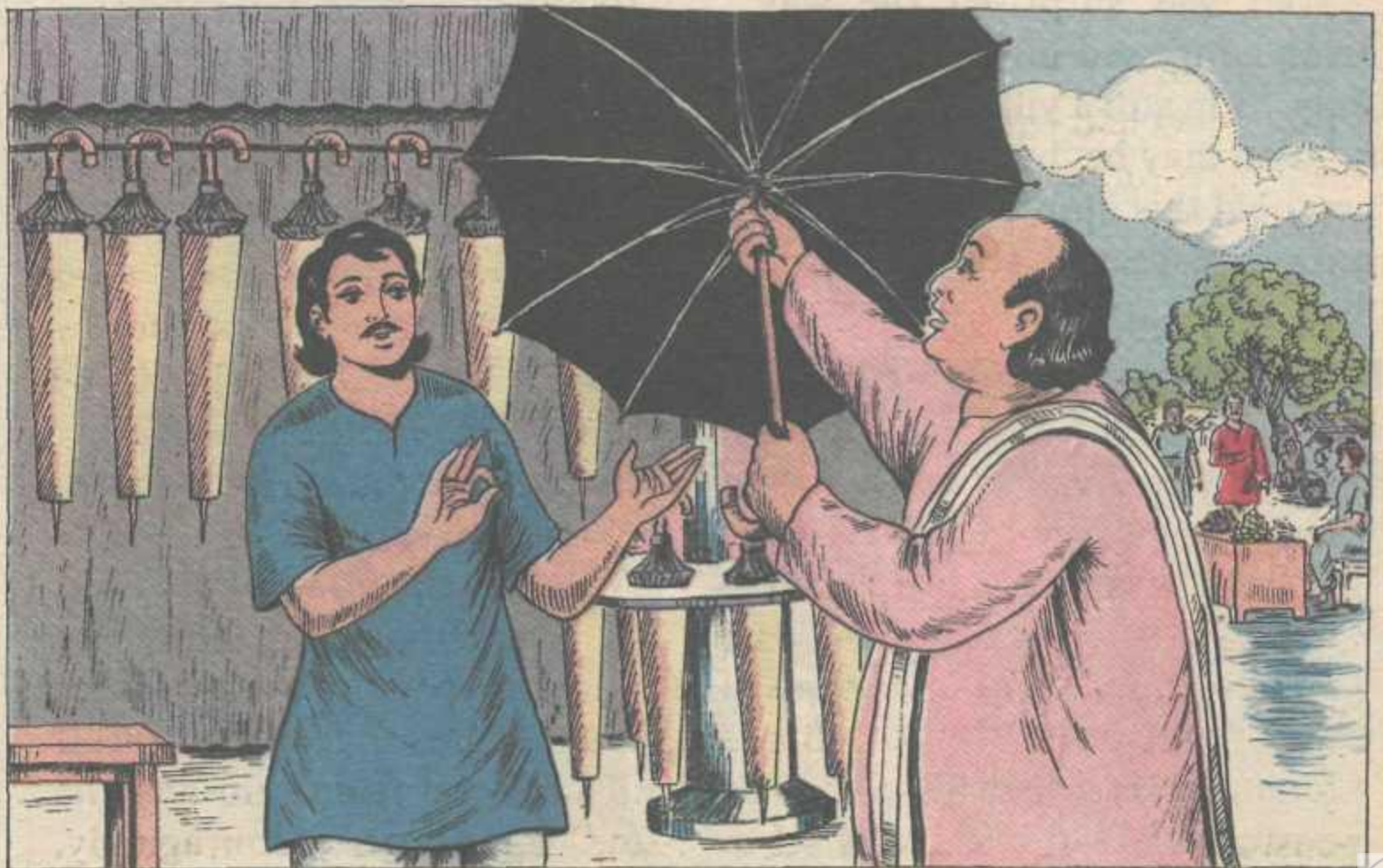
"I had some work in the town, and happened to come this way," said Hari, "when I saw you selling umbrellas. It was really fascinating the way you handled your customers. You seem to

have special umbrellas for both lean and fat people! Look at me. I'm of average size. What type of umbrella will you choose for me, Jivan?"

"Oh! That's not at all difficult. I've all types of umbrellas for all kinds of people," replied Jivan. "After all, it's the rainy season, and you too will need an umbrella." Jivan picked up an umbrella and gave it to Hari.

Hari opened it out, examined it from every side and angle and said, "I think this is really good."

"Why, when you hold this, you'll look like a zamindar!" remarked Jivan. "In fact, if you



were to ride a horse holding this umbrella, you may even look like a king! I'm sure you'll like it and want to buy it."

"You don't have to charm me into buying an umbrella from you!" said Hari. "For your sake, I shall certainly buy one. That's all."

"No, no, please don't mistake me," remonstrated Jivan very respectfully. "I wasn't trying my salesmanship on you. You try walking through the marketplace, holding the umbrella. Everybody will look up. You'll then know the truth of what I said."

Hari was surprised the way Jivan addressed him, so respectfully. "I'm still a villager, Jivan!"

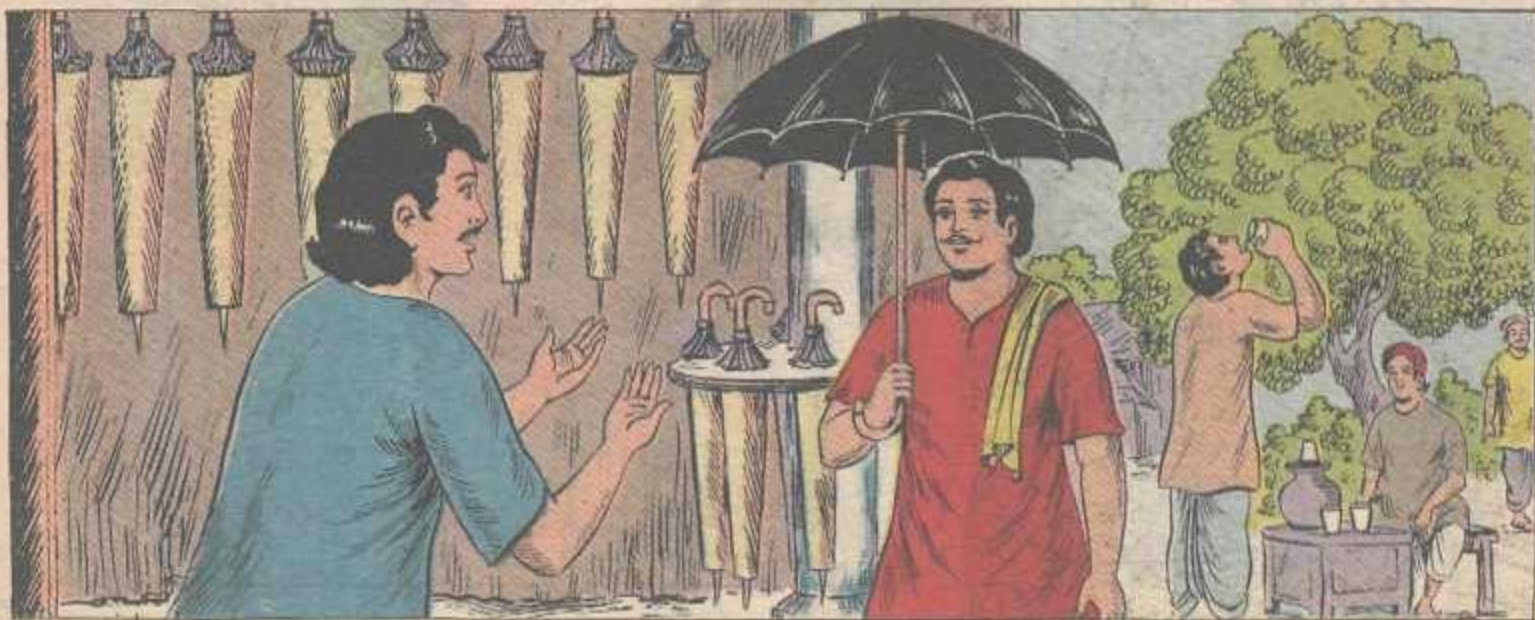
"You may be, but the moment you hold this umbrella, you get a certain respectful stature. Do I

have to say more about this umbrella?"

"You're very clever, Jivan," said Hari with a smile. "You seem to have a way with your customers and a special umbrella for each one of them!"

"Let me be honest with you now. After all, we both are from the same village, aren't we?" said Jivan almost in whispers. "All the umbrellas here are of the same make, same type, same size! But I've to tell my customers that they are all different from each other—so as to suit their needs and demands and tastes. That's salesmanship, Hari."

"Jivan, you're a model businessman, no doubt about it. You'll go far!" Hari complimented his friend and left his shop, taking an umbrella with him.



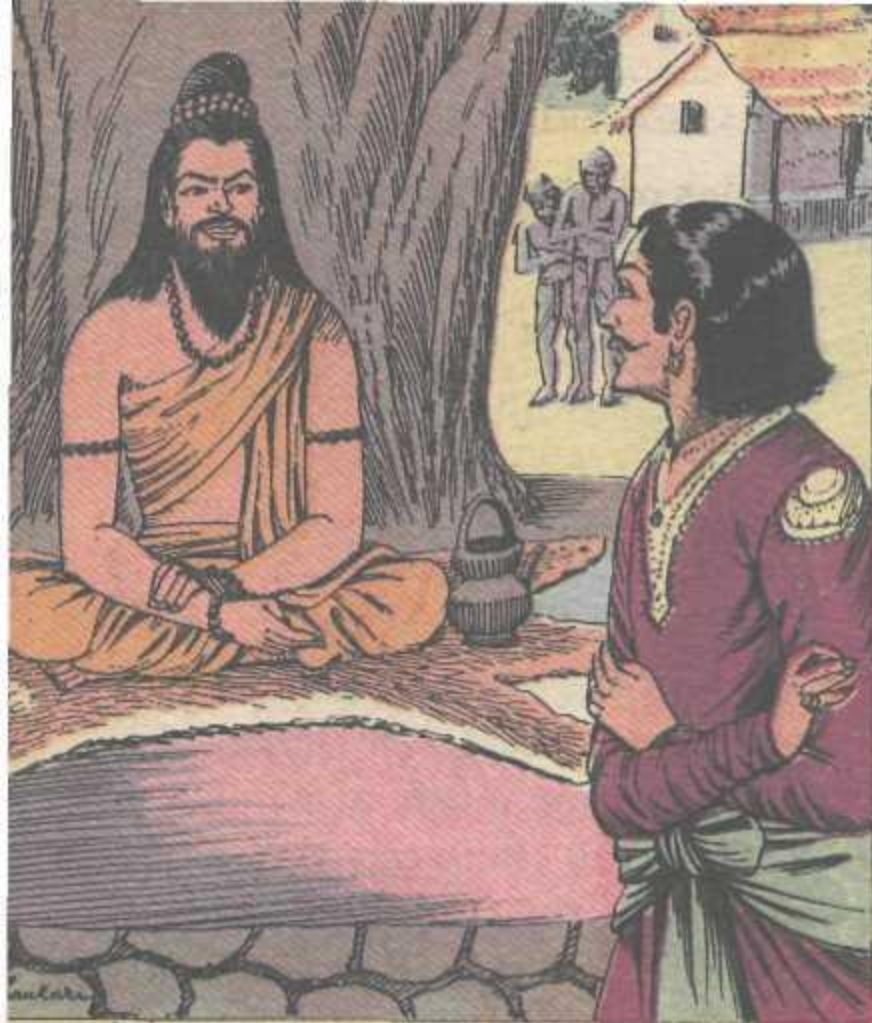


New Tales of King Vikram and the Vampire

WHO'S LEARNED, WHO'S NOT?

Dark was the night and weird the atmosphere. It rained from time to time; gusts of wind shook the trees. Between thunderclaps and the moaning of jackals could be heard the eerie laughter of spirits. Flashes of lightning revealed fearsome faces.

But King Vikramaditya did not swerve a bit. He climbed the ancient tree once again and brought down the corpse. However, as soon as he began crossing the desolate cremation grounds with the corpse lying on his shoulder, the vampire that possessed the corpse spoke: "O king, you're making untiring efforts and without respite as if you wish to achieve something. I admire your tenacity and courage. You sure have learnt all the disciplines a king requires. But mere bookish knowledge will not be



enough. It should be supplemented by experience in life. Only then will you have a smooth going. I shall tell you the story of a learned man and a man with a lot of worldly knowledge and experience. You'll then know of the difference." The vampire told this story:

Kasinath of Kamalpur was a wealthy gentleman. He made his riches from his trade, which brought in a lot of profit. Naturally, some of the other merchants of the place were jealous of him. His relations took advantage of his position and pestered

him for loans which he gave them without any hesitation. His wife was no exception. She frequently took money from him to buy ornaments of which she had a chestful but seldom used.

His son, too, took money from him to go on jaunts along with his friends. Kasinath tried his best to reform his son, but of no avail. He was sad that even his wife and son had no care for the wealth he had made. Naturally, he had no peace of mind.

One day, he heard that a *muni*, had arrived in Kamalpur and was staying near the temple. He called on sage Paramananda and told him of his sorrow. He listened to Kasinath and advised him to worship goddess Ambika. "My son, there is a temple about a hundred miles from here, situated on the banks of a lake called Ambasamudra. You must go there and worship the devi, and She will solve your problems. But mind you, She will appear before only learned persons."

Kasinath took leave of the sage, and on an auspicious day set out for the temple of Ambikadevi. He had not travelled for

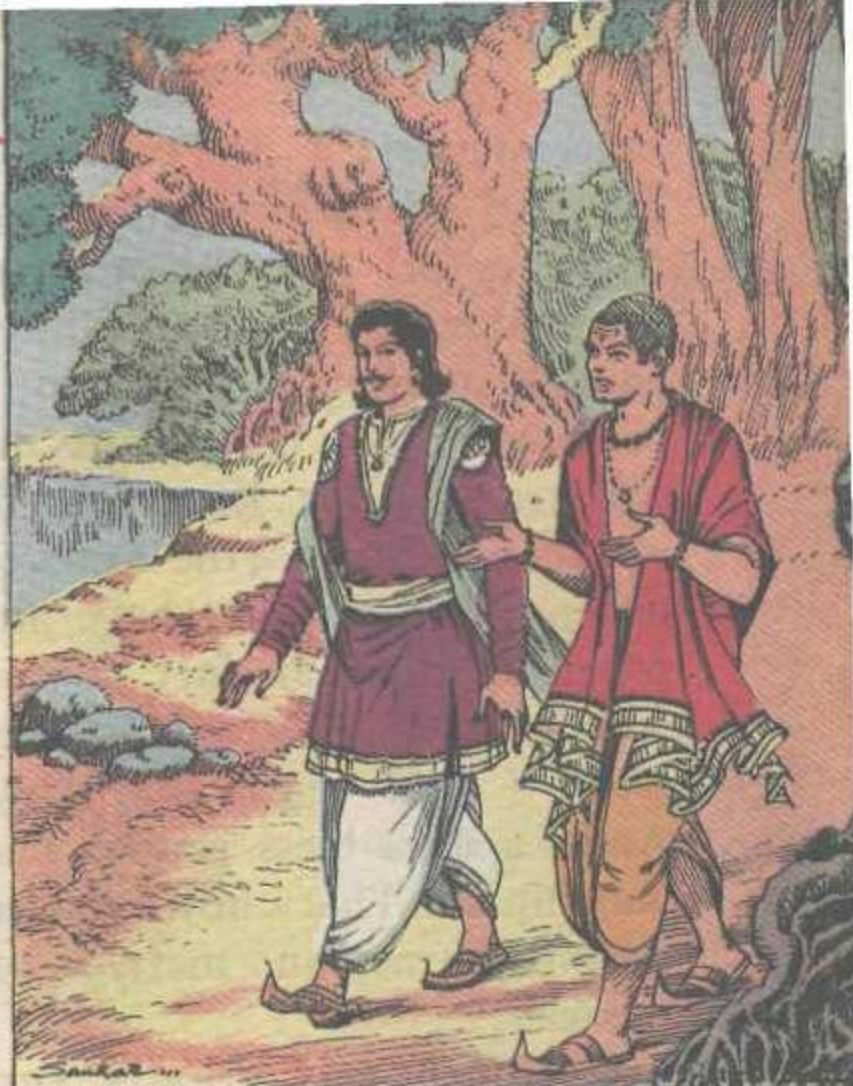


many days when he met Chatur-nath on the way. He claimed that he was well-versed in all the arts and sciences. There was nothing in the world that he did not know of. Kasinath was happy that he could make his acquaintance with such a person. He was glad he got a learned person as his companion, and as they travelled together, he could learn a lot of things from him. "I'm really fortunate, I'm able to clear many doubts with you," Kasinath told Chatur-nath. "I very much value your words of advice."

"I'm also happy that I got a companion like you," said Chatur-nath. "We'll have a nice time till we reach the Ambagiri ranges. That's where I'm heading to."

"In fact, I'm also going that side," said Kasinath. "I wish to worship Devi Ambika. I'm told there is a temple dedicated to her near Ambasamudra. Isn't it on one side of the Ambagiri mountain?"

"Yes, but what a coincidence?" remarked Chatur-nath. "I, too, had been planning a visit to the same temple. You must have some problem to present to the goddess. Otherwise, people don't



normally visit that temple."

Kasinath told him what his problems were—something caused by his wealth. Hence his decision to worship the devi. "But you're a learned person. You certainly would not have any problem that would take you to the temple."

To which Chatur-nath responded: "My father was a great intellectual. It was he who taught me all disciplines. Unfortunately, the knowledge I've acquired brings in just enough money to help us make both ends meet. I am not able to fulfil my

other desires. I don't have a house of my own; whatever my wife asks for—utensils, or dress, or ornaments—I don't have enough money to buy them; I can't even get the things my children wish for. Knowledge is just the end, and not the means to an end. I, too, don't have any peace of mind. In fact, I even wondered why I should remain alive. I had heard that Devi Ambika does bless people who worship her. That's how I started on this journey and met you on the way."

Kasinath was greatly surprised. If such a learned person as Chaturmath was beset with problems and was seeking the blessings of Ambika, did he himself stand a chance of securing any solution from the goddess? "My friend, I've decided to go back home. I don't think the goddess will ever appear before me," he told Chaturmath.

"No, that won't be advisable, my friend," Chaturmath tried to console him. "After having travelled so far, it isn't right to go back without worshipping at the temple. At least, why don't you go with me? After I complete my

worship, we shall go back together."

Kasinath agreed to his friend's suggestion. "What you say is correct. After having come thus far, let me at least see the temple, even if I may not go in and worship Ambika. I shall at least enjoy your company for some more days. Let me have that satisfaction."

Both of them soon reached the lake Ambasamudra and had no difficulty in finding the temple. Above the main gate was written these words: "ONLY INTELLECTUALS WILL SEE THE IDOL".

Chaturmath first had a dip in the holy lake and entered the temple in all reverence. Kasinath, who waited for him outside, went about collecting flowers and as he was stringing a garland, Chaturmath came out and said, "Oh! You've prepared a garland for the devi? But there's no idol. The temple is all in ruins. I've a fear the idol of the goddess had been taken away by someone."

Kasinath was now curious. He went inside, garland in hand. Chaturmath remarked with a sneer, "I myself have not been



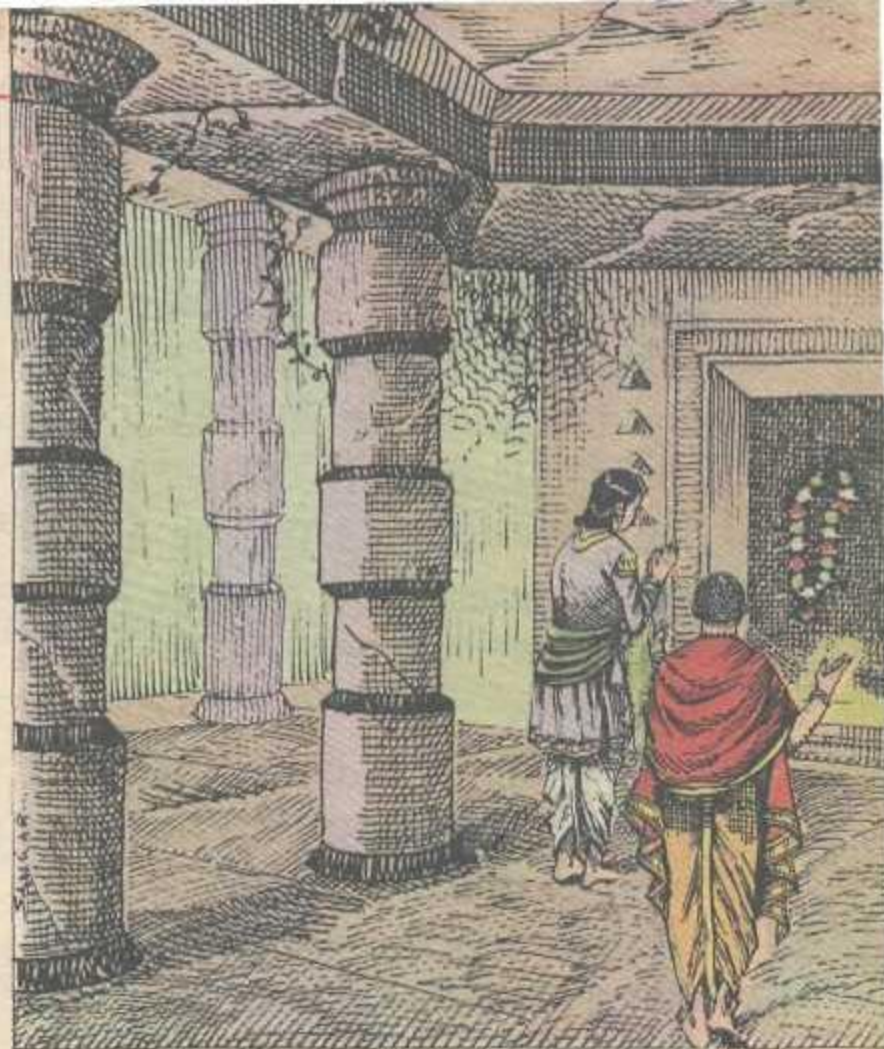
able to see any idol; do *you* expect to see any?"

By then Kasinath had already reached the *sanctum sanctorum*. "There! What a beautiful idol! How can people lacking in intellect ever expect to see the idol?" remarked Kasinath, as he placed the garland on the idol of Ambika.

Chaturmath moved to where Kasinath had stood a while ago. Hard luck! He could not see any idol. However, he saw the garland hanging in the air, as if someone was wearing it. He was wonderstruck. He could not understand why a learned man like him still was not able to see the idol.

Kasinath now felt greatly at peace. He thought that the very sight of the idol had given him the answer to all the questions that were disturbing his mind. "Just as I had accompanied you to this temple," he told Chaturmath, "you should go with me to my place." Chaturmath readily agreed.

As they travelled back, Chaturmath appeared still ridden with problems, while Kasinath had reasons to be happy and



contented. When they reached Kamalpur, Kasinath courteously invited Chaturmath home. After they had shared a meal together, Kasinath said, "I know you're really a great intellectual. You must accept a token of my respect and regard for you." And he gave him a bag containing gold coins and precious stones.

The vampire concluded the story there. He turned to King Vikramaditya and pestered him with questions. "Kasinath had started on his journey with a purpose—to find a solution to his problems by worshipping



goddess Ambika. But he stopped half-way and decided to return home—why? He called a great intellectual like Chaturmath an unlearned person. Why? The idol could be seen by Kasinath, and not by Chaturmath. Why? If you know the answers and yet decide not to satisfy me, let me warn you, your head will be blown to pieces!”

The king was calm and cool. He told the vampire, “Kasinath thought that his wealth was the cause of his agony and unrest. Whereas, Chaturmath did not have any wealth despite his intellectual excellence and wisdom. When Kasinath knew what had made Chaturmath to seek help from the goddess, he felt that he was approaching the same goddess for the wrong

purpose. Hence his decision to discontinue the journey. He knew that by sharing his riches with others, he could secure peace of mind. Chaturmath was completely wanting in such wisdom. That’s why Kasinath called him as one with no real knowledge. As Kasinath was willing to derive worldly wisdom from such practical experience, the goddess was pleased with him and appeared before him. Chaturmath was really ignorant of all this and he could not see the idol.”

The vampire realised that he had been outwitted by King Vikramaditya. He gave him the slip and flew back to the ancient tree, taking the corpse along with him. The king drew his sword and went after the vampire.





23

(Ravana and Lakshmana, leading the Vanara army, are at the gates of Lanka city. A war is imminent. Yet, Rama sends Angada as his emissary to Ravana to avoid a fight. The demon king refuses to return Sita and disregards Rama's threat of annihilation of all demons including Ravana. He orders his men to capture Angada, who gathers them under his arms and flies away. Ravana gets the first taste of the might of the Vanara army. The war starts. Initial successes for the Vanaras are marred by a set-back to Rama and Lakshmana. Sita is taken in the Pushpak to see them lying unconscious.)

The strategy planned out by Rama to enter the city of Lanka along with the Vanara army was successfully carried out. The Vanara soldiers had armed themselves with huge stones and boulders and heavy branches of trees to meet any resistance from the soldiers of Ravana. They surrounded the

city. People fled to the heart of the city fearing death at the hands of the invading army, from whom rose fearsome shouts challenging the demons to a fight.

The peace-loving Rama wanted to avoid a war if he could. So, he asked Angada to go to Ravana as his emissary to make

LANKA NOW A BATTLEGROUND





one last attempt to bring sense into the demon king's mind. Angada entered Ravana's court and delivered the message sent by Rama:

"O Ravana! You might have received boons and blessings from Lord Brahma. But you're making use of them for carrying out sinful acts. To good people I'm always considerate. However, I may tolerate and forgive cruel people once or twice, to give them an opportunity to reform themselves. I've given you enough and more opportunities to desist from heinous acts and

correct yourself. You seem to have wasted all those chances. Not only that; you've even kidnapped my wife. Still I made peaceful overtures. You never paid any heed to them.

"Right now my army has surrounded your city. I can annihilate each and every demon here. It's not at all difficult for me. It's for you to decide whether you want war or would surrender to me peacefully. If you opt for war, then you may take a last look at Lanka, because you may not get another chance to do so."

As Angada delivered this message from Rama, Ravana's anger was mounting. "You stupid monkey!" he greeted Angada with a sneer. "What did you take me for, to come to my court and threaten me like that?" He turned to the commanders present in the court and ordered, "Capture this monkey and put an end to his life!"

Four demons rushed forward to catch hold of Angada, who feigned as if he was helpless. The moment the demons caught him, Angada grabbed them by his strong hands and flew out of the *darbar* hall. As he flew over



Lanka, with the four demons under his arms, he destroyed the golden towers and domes that came his way. When he reached a good height, he dropped the four demons, and they fell down dead.

"Hey Ravana!" Angada shouted from high above. "None of your tricks will have any effect on me. Do you know who I am? I'm none else than Angada, son of Bali who had crushed you as if you were a ten-headed insect. Don't play with me!"

Ravana took Angada's shout to be an ill-omen. The Vanara soldiers were by now excited, awaiting the start of a battle any moment. The mighty Sushena made a reconnaissance of the fort of Lanka as directed by Sugriva. Some demons mistook it to be a surrender to the Vanara army and they rushed in to alert Ravana. The demon king left his throne and went up to the terrace of the palace to view the real state of affairs. Wherever he turned, he could only see columns and columns of Vanara soldiers. At that time he felt diffident about winning a war with them.

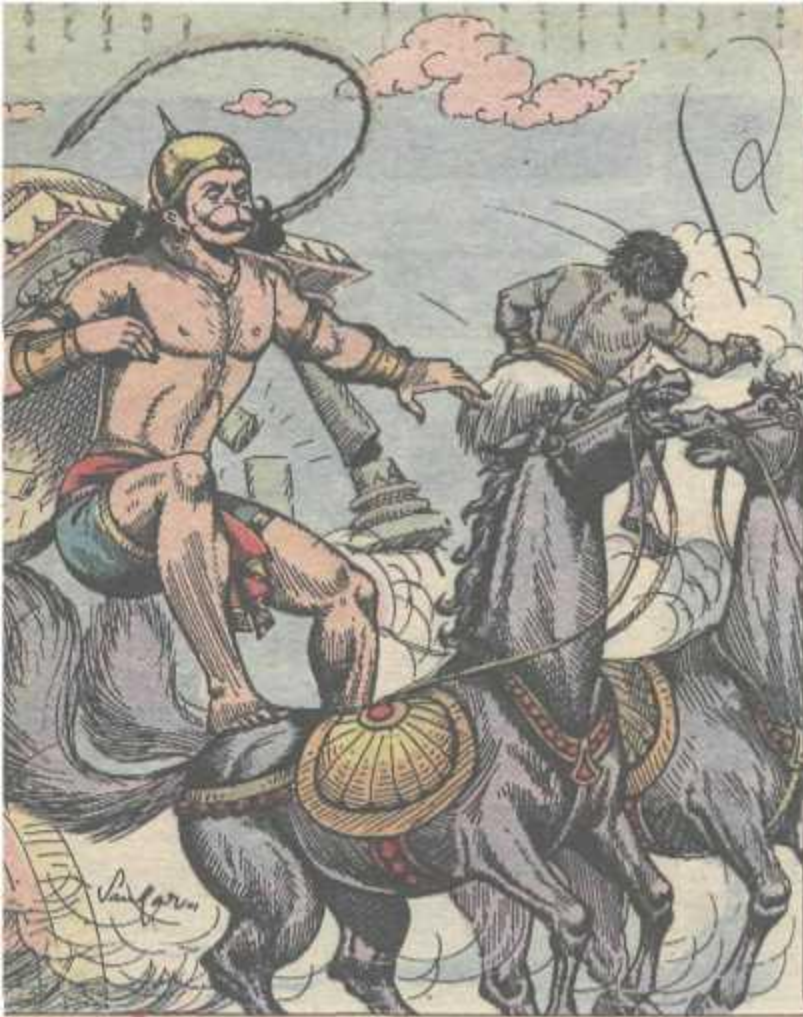
From his vantage point at the northern gate, Rama could see



the fortifications and how well-guarded they were. Suddenly his thoughts went to Sita who was being kept behind such impregnable buildings. He became sad as well as very angry. He faced the Vanara army and ordered, "You needn't wait any longer. Engage the enemy in fight. Don't let any one of them escape. Put an end to every one of them. Victory is on our side. Come on! Forward!"

The Vanara soldiers were just waiting for these words from Rama. They scaled the ramparts and crossed over to the fortress





and began pounding the gates. Their shouts of challenge and joy reached Ravana's ears as well.

Vibhishana, in battle array, was already beside Rama. Commanders like Gaja, Gavaya, Kadaksha, Sarabha, and Gandhamadana were busy walking up and down the rows of soldiers, giving them all instructions.

Ravana, too, ordered his army to start fighting. They beat drums and amidst shouting rushed out to the several gates carrying a variety of weapons. They were now face to face with the Vanara

army, who had successfully penetrated the fort.

A fierce fight ensued. The Vanara soldiers fought using huge trees and their strong branches as arms. Some of them were experts in hurling stones. Those Vanara soldiers who could not lay their hands on trees or stones made good use of the long pointed nails on their fingers. On the other side, the demon soldiers fought with tridents, spears, and axes. The entire city was one battleground.

Four demons, who reached where Rama was standing, aimed arrows at him. But he warded them off and himself sent arrows and beheaded all four of them. Mainda easily crushed demon Vajramushti under his arms. Sushena went after Vidyutmali and soon drove him to his end. These initial successes encouraged the Vanara soldiers to fight with greater enthusiasm.

Ravana's son Indrajit engaged Angada; one of Vibhishana's erstwhile ministers, Sampathi, fought with Prajasa; Hanuman and Jambumali tried their wits against each other; Gaja attacked demon Tapasa, and Neela fought



with Nikumba. Sugriva engaged Prajana, while Lakshmana took on Virupaksha. Ravana seemed to have sent some of his chief commanders to meet the advancing Vanara army.

Angada succeeded in breaking Indrajit's chariot. In the fight, the charioteer and the horse were killed. Prajasa was killed by Sampathi. Jambumali fell down on receiving one blow from Hanuman. When he got up, he received another mighty blow. This went on for a long time. Nala managed to pluck the eyes of Pratipasa. Prajana met with his doom at the hands of Sugriva. By sunset, all of Ravana's commanders had fallen in the battlefield. Ravana was thoroughly shaken when he received the news of their fall or death.

Even after sunset, the fighting continued. The Vanara soldiers were slowly getting tired. It was pitch dark everywhere. The demons took advantage of the darkness and began swallowing the Vanara soldiers, who could distinguish the demons only with the help of the glittering ornaments they wore. And they fought well with the demons.



Both Rama and Lakshmana went to their help and killed several demons.

After he lost his charioteer and horse, Indrajit resorted to tricks. He sent a *naga* arrow and bound Rama and Lakshmana. "If I am compelled to start my magic war, not even Lord Indra will be able to survive. I can easily overpower you both. Wait till I kill you!" he shouted to the two brothers.

As they had been hit all over by arrows, Rama and Lakshmana were incapacitated. Some of the arrows even made them fall unconscious. Hanuman and





other Vanara soldiers sat around them and shed tears. And then they started in search of Indrajit to take revenge on him. But he was nowhere to be seen. However, Vibhishana, with his occult powers, was able to locate Indrajit, who was right then gloating over his success in the company of demons. They turned against the Vanara soldiers who received blow after blows. They had taken their two heroes as dead, and their morale was shaken.

Even Sugriva was shocked for a moment. Vibhishana pacified

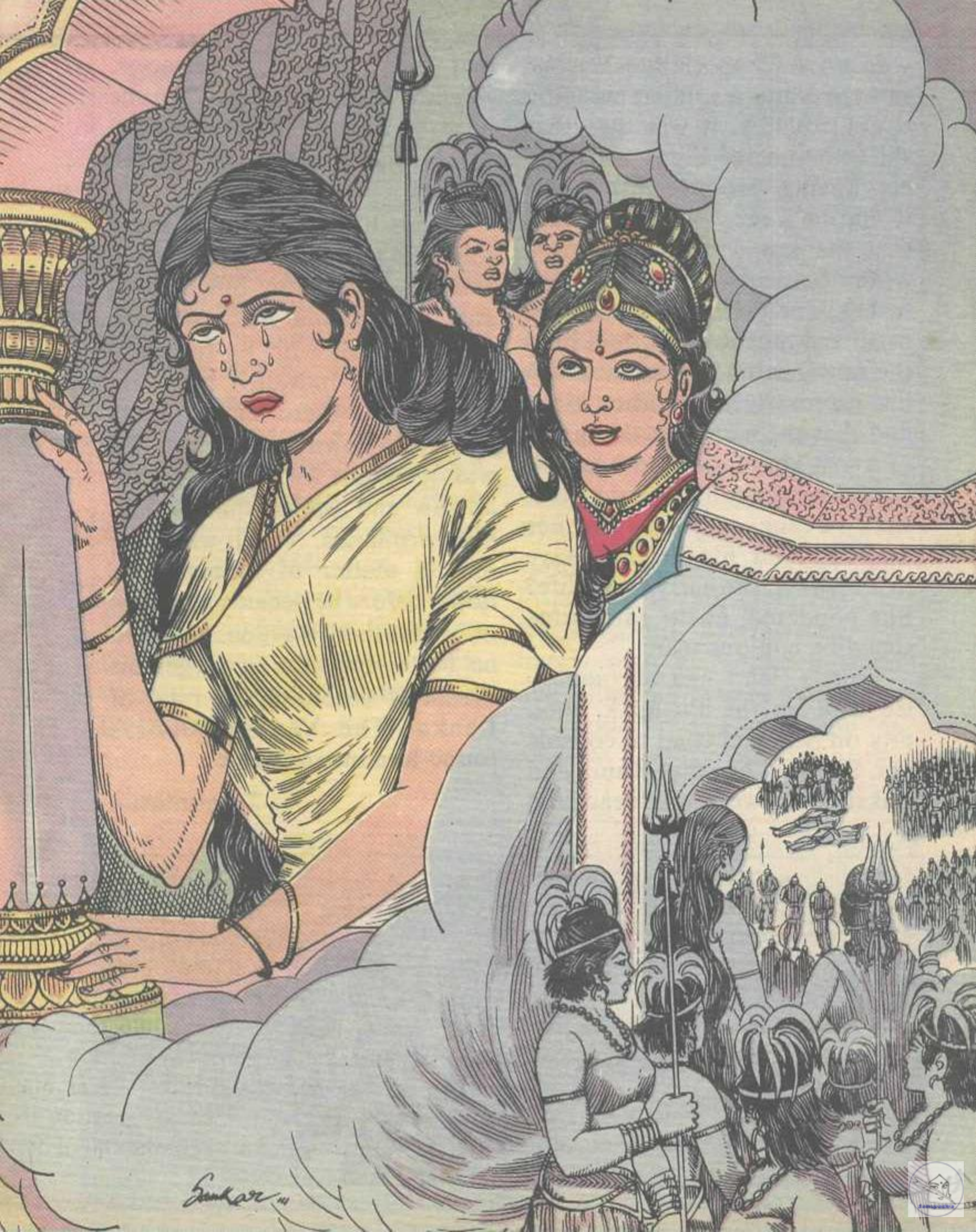
all of them. "Don't worry, Rama and Lakshmana have merely lost their consciousness. It's all in the game of war. That should not affect you and weaken you. We must fight with greater vigour. They will regain consciousness soon."

Meanwhile Indrajit went to the palace and sought out Ravana. "There's some good news for you, father. I've killed Rama and Lakshmana!" The demon king could not control his joy. He embraced his son and asked him for details.

Later, Ravana sent for some of the demonesses guarding Sita. He told them, "You may inform Sita that my son Indrajit has killed Rama and Lakshmana in battle. You take her in the Pushpak and let her see their bodies from above. She has all along been boasting that her husband is a mighty warrior. Let her realise that he was no match to my son. Advise her to marry me and lead a happy life."

The demonesses did as they were ordered to. They took Sita in the Pushpak and showed her Rama and Lakshmana lying in the battlefield. Sita was struck





with sorrow, especially when she saw the Vanara soldiers weeping uncontrollably. It was then that she remembered some astrologers having predicted that she would be a mother. That meant that she would not become a widow before children were born to her. The astrologers had also predicted that Rama would hold the Aswamedha yaga to establish his suzerainty over other kings and that she would be the queen of a vast kingdom. Those astrologers would not have said a lie. If that be the case, would her husband and his brother have met with such an early end in life? She pondered, at the same time shedding copious tears.

Trijada, who had accompanied Sita on the Pushpak, took pity on Sita and tried to console her. She told her that Rama and Lakshmana were not dead and

had only fallen unconscious. Sitadevi was comforted when she received such a reassurance. She was brought back to the Ashoka garden.

Meanwhile, one of the Vanara soldiers rushed to Vibhishana and informed him how Rama and Lakshmana had swooned after they were hit by the *naga* arrow from Indrajit's bow. He hurried to where the brothers were lying down unconscious. He was overcome with grief by what he saw and wailed that he had been orphaned. Now it would be only a matter of moments or hours before he became a captive of his brother, Ravana. It would be better for him to forget his dream of becoming the ruler of Lanka. The Vanara soldiers found him inconsolable.

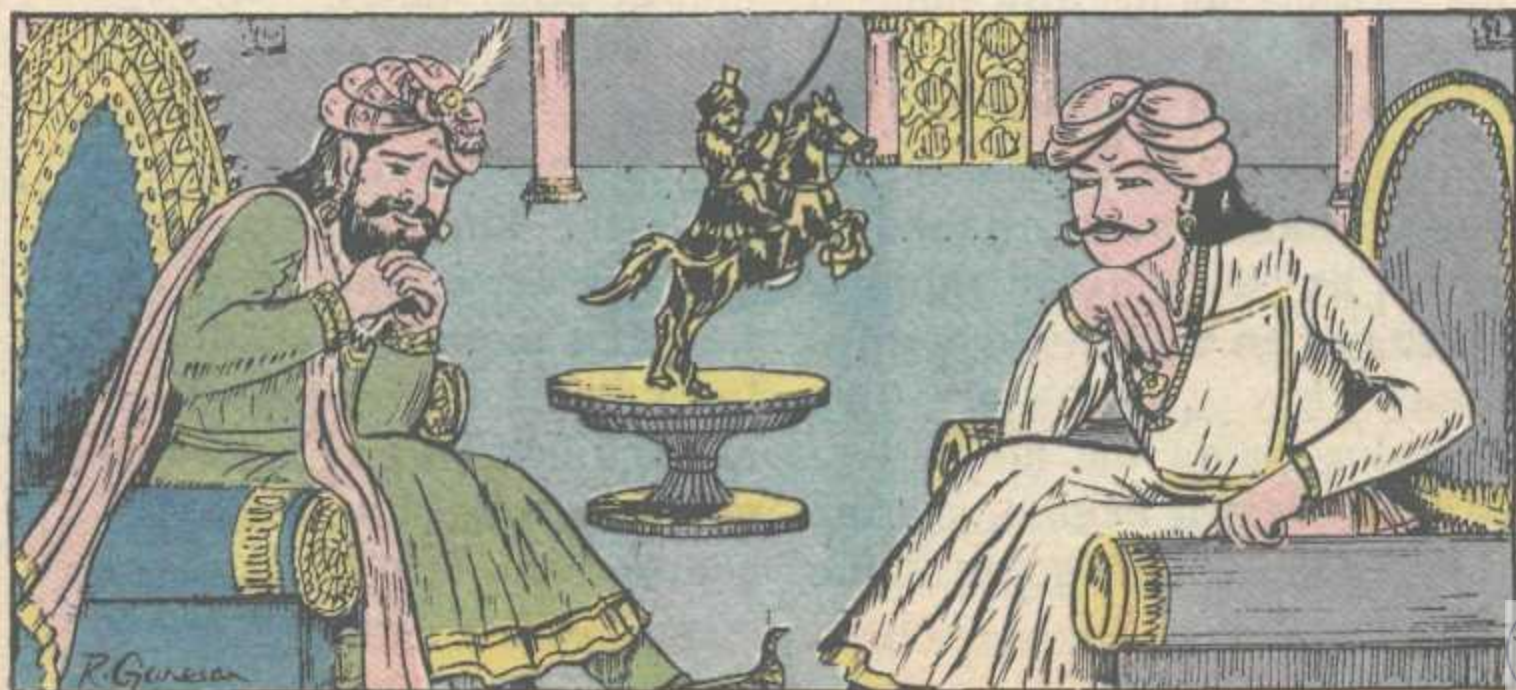
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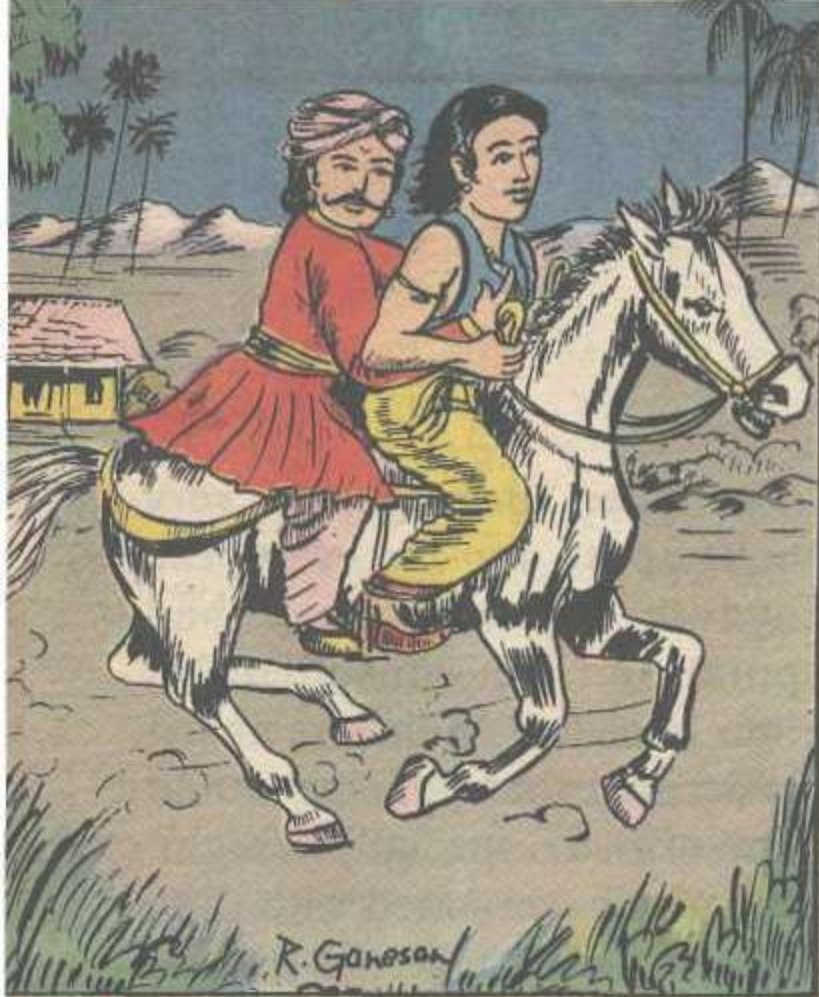


The Missing Stars (Steed!)

Dhavalpur remained a quiet and peaceful kingdom for a long time. Suddenly, because of recurring drought in the neighbouring states, there was an influx of refugees, and the kingdom found it difficult to provide food and shelter for all of them. Not many could get work and they remained idle and, as the saying goes, Satan found work for them. So much so, there were constant complaints of thefts, wayside robberies and other petty crimes.

The ruler, Brajraj, was very much upset by the way the kingdom was earning a bad reputation. He consulted his prime minister, Mahavir, and it was decided that policing would be intensified, especially at night. Not entirely contented with that, Mahavir even suggested that he would himself go out in the night inspecting the different parts of the kingdom. Brajraj was very happy with his prime minister and allowed him to be away from the court if the situation so





demanding.

However, Mahavir had one disadvantage. As a result of an injury to his hand, he was unable to hold the reins and ride a horse by himself. He had, therefore, to take a rider along with him—a rider, not only strong but in whom he had confidence. He thought he could depend on his young stable hand, Bahadur, whom he had watched riding a horse like an expert. Night after night, they would start out, Bahadur riding the horse with Mahavir seated behind, sharing the saddle. After going some

distance, they would stop and dismount. Leaving Bahadur to take care of the horse, Mahavir would go round the place. After walking along one street, he would get back to see whether Bahadur was awake or had gone to sleep. And then he inspected another street and again would peep in, sometimes unobtrusively, to satisfy himself before he turned into another street.

He never for once found Bahadur asleep. He often appeared to be lost in his own thoughts which, Mahavir thought, was in a way good as that kept the youth awake. He would merely check up with him, “Did anyone pass this way?” and Bahadur would reply, “None, Sir.” “Did you notice anything unusual?” Mahavir might ask him at other times, “No, Sir, I was thinking,” Bahadur would reply.

This went on for days together. Both the king and his prime minister were happy that there were not many complaints now from the people, and most parts of the kingdom were once again quiet and peaceful. Mahavir, of course, continued his inspection



tours on horseback.

One night, Mahavir decided to go to a particular area which was not completely free of complaints. As he rode out with Bahadur, he remembered that it was time he rewarded the youngster for being faithful to him. In fact, there arose a doubt in him whether Bahadur did not have the same thoughts whenever he said he was *thinking*.

That night, after he had combed one street for undesirable elements, Mahavir went back to where he had, as usual, left Bahadur with the horse. No, he was not sleeping. He was sitting on the ground, leaning against a wall, and looking at the sky.

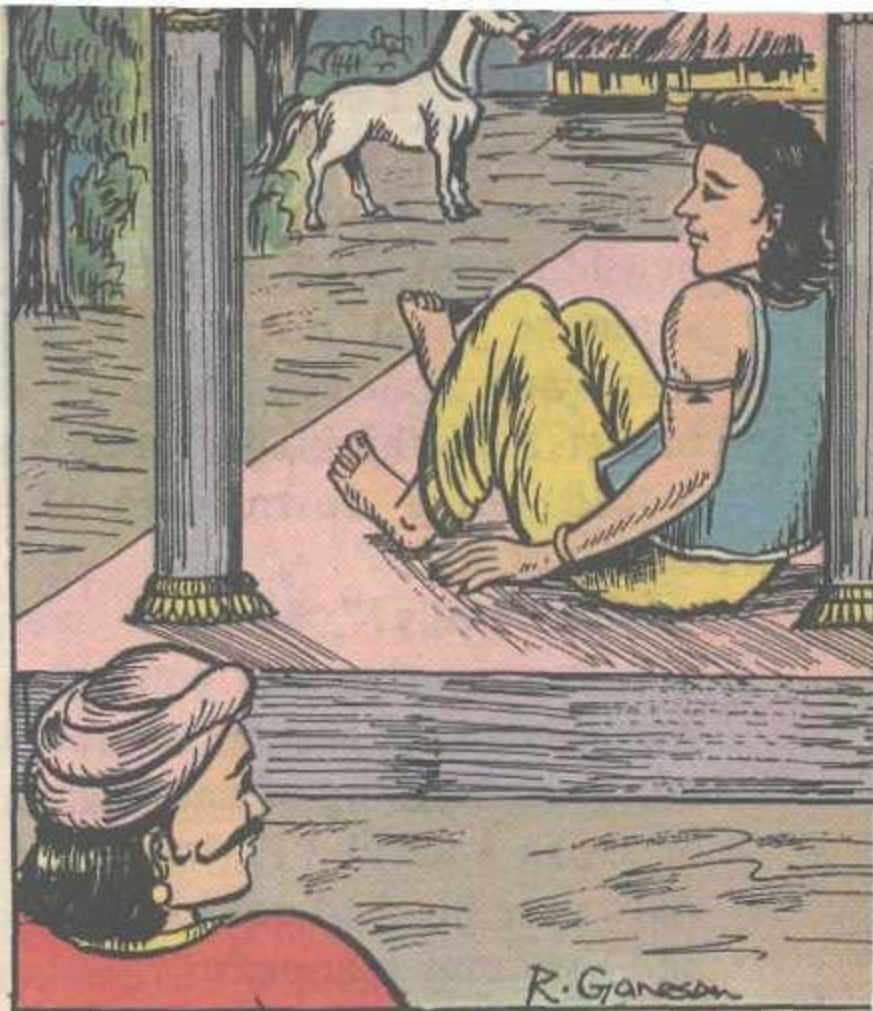
"Be watchful, this place is notorious," alerted Mahavir.

"Yes, Sir," assured Bahadur. "I'm fully awake."

Mahavir went on another round and came back. "What're you doing, Bahadur?"

"Sir, I was thinking.." the youth replied. He still had his eyes on the sky.

Mahavir now really became curious. "Thinking of what, Bahadur?"



"Sir, would you care to look at the sky?" Bahadur prompted him. "I was thinking of whoever it was who had gone and given it a coat of such bright blue colour!"

"Yes, it's a bright blue," agreed Mahavir. "You may continue to think. Maybe you'll also find who had painted the sky blue." He left the youth again to inspect another street.

On his return, he found Bahadur still having his eyes rivetted on the sky. "What're you now thinking, Bahadur?"

"Sir, while I was watching the

sky, some stars disappeared suddenly," said Bahadur in bewilderment. "I was thinking, someone must have gone up there and collected them in a basket. I was thinking whether he would come down with the basket of stars."

"Oh, really?" Mahavir was now certain that the youngster was fully awake and, fortunately, not at all thinking of any reward or extra salary! "Perhaps, the stars were blacked out by clouds and they may reappear."

Mahavir went upto another street and took some time to come back. The first light had fallen by then. Bahadur was awake, still leaning against the wall. "What're you *now* thinking, Bahadur?"

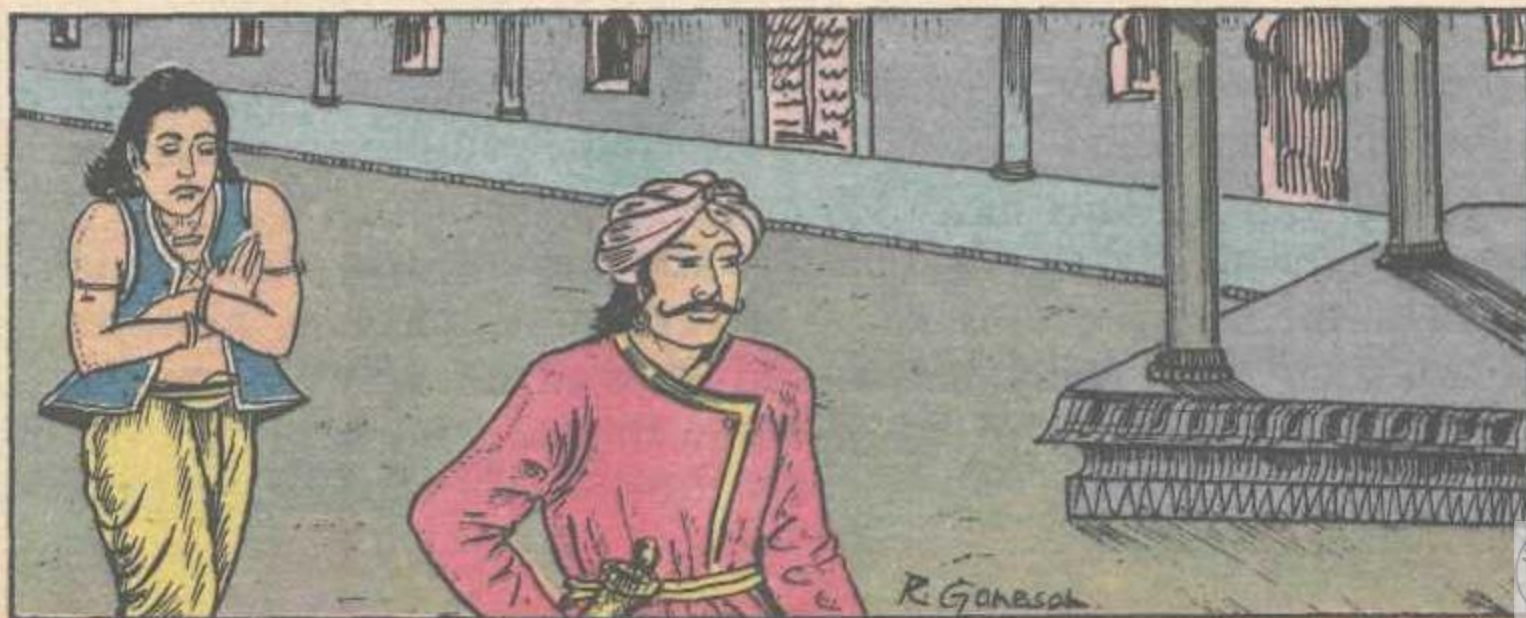
"Sir, I was thinking I was thinking" Bahadur stam-

mered for an answer. "Sir, I was thinking, who would have stolen our horse?"

Mahavir noticed the missing horse only then. "You, stupid! You weren't *thinking*... you were sleeping and dreaming! Come on, let's go and find out who has taken the horse. I had warned you to be careful. Still you didn't see who had come for our horse. How can I ever depend on you?"

Mahavir walked out of the place, followed by Bahadur with a crestfallen face. As he trudged along, he was, yes, thinking: would the person who stole the stars have come down and taken the horse to escape with the silver stars?

Mahavir's thoughts were, however, more earthy! What strategy could he plan to catch the horse-thief?





LET US KNOW

Is there any country which has never become a foreigners' slave?

—Shivabhakta Gurung, Bombay

The attempt by one country to dominate others, either by direct rule or by less obvious means, is known as imperialism or colonialism. Great Britain was a colonial power; India, at one time, was a British colony. There are several countries which were never "colonies" of stronger powers. China for example; or for that matter Japan; or even Russia before the October Revolution of 1917, which only resulted in the overthrow of monarchy and establishment of a government by the people.

Who are the Fifth Columnists?

—Aparajita Chakraborty, Dombivli

There was a military rebellion in Spain in 1936 by Franco against the Republican Government of Manuel Azana. This came to be known as the Spanish Civil War, which ended in victory for Franco. His General Mola, at one stage, boasted that their supporters were attacking capital Madrid with four columns and that they already had a 'fifth column' inside the city—to mean that a group within was secretly helping an enemy who was attacking from outside. Such secret groups of people subsequently came to be dubbed as fifth columnists.

We are grateful to the Telugu Association of Malaysia for pointing out that Telugu is one of the languages spoken in Mauritius (see Chandamama, May 1992). *The omission was not intentional.* The Association further informs us that the former Governor-General and present (since March 12 last) President, Sir Veerasamy Ringadoo, is himself a Telugu, that the Aneerood Jugnauth cabinet has Telugu ministers, and that Ugadi (Telugu New Year) is a public holiday.

—Editor

PHOTO CAPTION CONTEST



M. Natarajan



Mahatesh C. Morabad.

Can you formulate a caption in a few words, to suit these pictures related to each other? If yes, you may write it on a post card and mail it to Photo Caption Contest, Chandamama, to reach us by 20th of the current month. A reward of Rs.100/- will go to the best entry which will be published in the issue after the next.

The Prize for July '92 goes to:—

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The Winning Entry : "A HOLY COMPANION" — "A LOWLY COMPANION"

PICKS FROM THE WISE

In the battle of existence, talent is the punch; fact is the clever footwork.

- *Wilson Mizner*

Selfishness is the cause of sorrow.

- *Buddha*

The quality of mercy is not strained.

- *Shakespeare*



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